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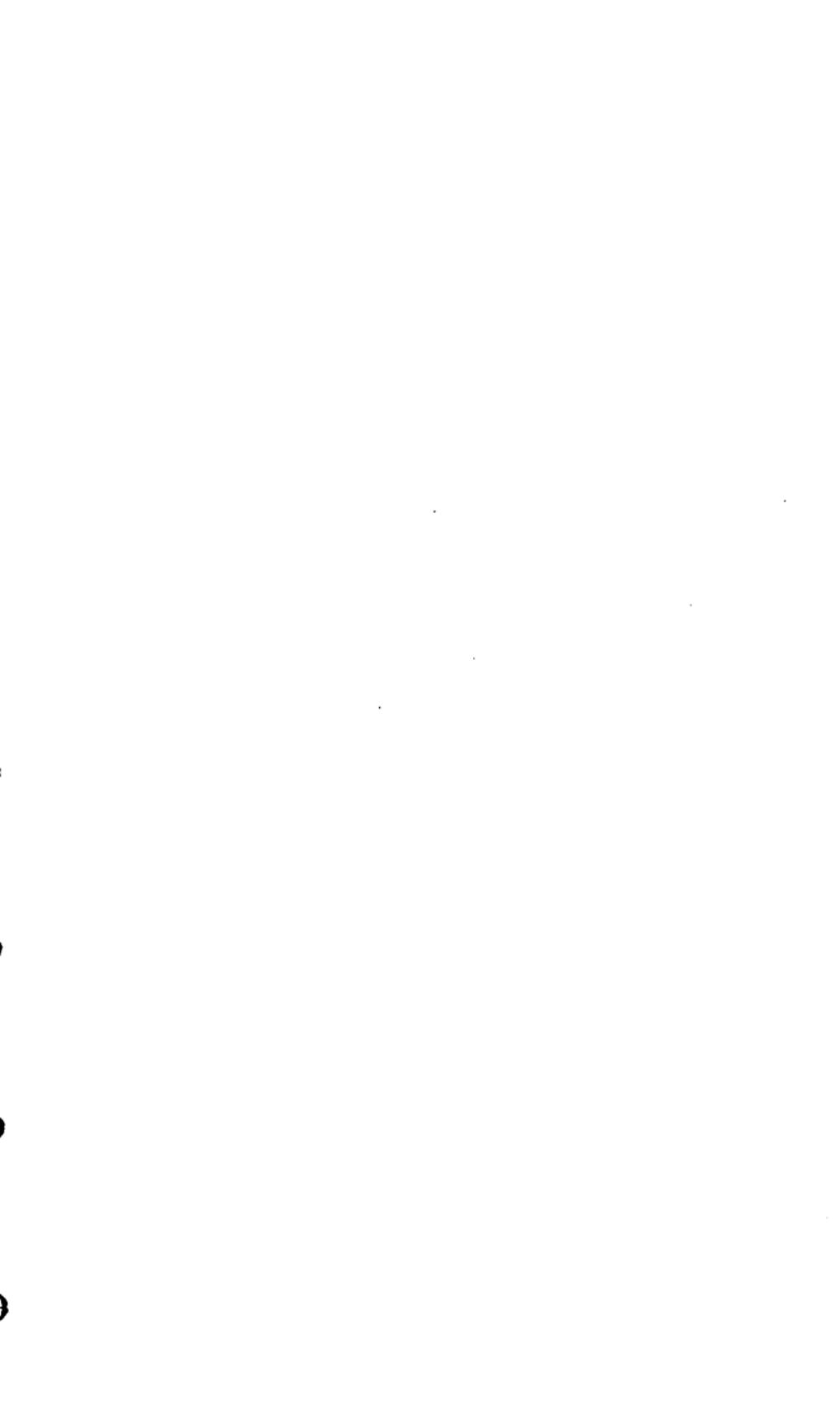
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SIR GALAHAD

The Riverside Literature Series

KING ARTHUR STORIES FROM MALORY

DONE FROM THE TEXT OF
SIR THOMAS MALORY'S MORTE DARTHUR

BY

LILLIAN O. STEVENS

AND

EDWARD FRANK ALLEN



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Geometric Properties of the \mathcal{L}_1 and \mathcal{L}_2 Metrics

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PREFACE

THE aim of this little book is to give to the pupil a connected cycle of Sir Thomas Malory's quaint, beautiful stories of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. The book grew out of a need of the work at St. Agatha. It makes no pretense to originality of matter. On the contrary, every effort has been made to keep the text like the original, just so far as is compatible with the understanding of the child. So, while much matter has been discarded in order that the stories might be brought within reasonable compass, the form and diction are Malory's. A few difficult constructions have been simplified, and some of the oldest English expressions changed. Such obsolete or archaic forms as have been retained will, it is believed, with the help of the context and the glossary appended, be easily understood by the children.

ST. AGATHA, 1908.



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INTRODUCTION

THERE is supposed to have lived in England many, many centuries ago, after the coming of the Saxons, and before the coming of the Normans, a great and noble king, Arthur by name. Of all Christian kings he is said to have been the greatest and bravest; and the stories of his noble acts, his feats of arms, his strength, his loyalty to his knights, his humanity, his love, his exquisite gentleness, his fine courtesy, have come down to us through the ages in many forms and in many tongues.

King Arthur lived at the time when chivalry was at its height. This was the age when the highest calling of man was the call to arms; when men showed their loyalty to their king, their baron, and their lady, by feats of arms; when their noblest duty, their noblest sport was to fight. In those days, every boy hoped to become squire to some noble knight, and afterward, when his strength had been tested and his courage proved, to become himself a knight, to take the oath of knighthood, and then to enter the lists to fight his way to fame and honor.

This was the age also when religious fervor burned high, and there was a great, active movement to recover the Sangreal,¹

Search for
the San-
greal

¹ See footnote, page 83.

or Holy Grail. Once, for a little while, the Sangreal was in England, but, through the wickedness of the people, it was lost. After that, the knights could not rest until it was recovered. So they sought it for long years and in many lands, and many a brave knight in his strong young manhood left England, never to be blest by a sight of the cup and never to return from his long quest. For only those ever had a glimpse of the Sangreal whose lives were pure and perfect.

About himself at Camelot, King Arthur had gathered a hundred and fifty of the best knights in the world. Not every knight was privileged to sit at Arthur's famous Round Table; for the table was magic, and the names of those who were to occupy the sieges appeared in golden letters over the places. One seat, that at Arthur's right, known as the Siege Perilous, could be occupied only by the purest and best knight in the world. To this seat was called Galahad — Galahad in all his slim young beauty, the light of a clean, holy spirit in his eye, the radiance of a great hope on his face.

Sir Galahad And to Galahad, Galahad the gentle, Galahad the courteous, Galahad the perfect, was given the wonderful joy of finding the Sangreal. For immediately after his introduction to the court of King Arthur, Galahad started on his quest. Inspired by him, almost all of the other knights avowed their purpose of seeking the Sangreal in distant lands; and so was disbanded one

of the fairest and bravest fellowships that ever any king had.

The references to King Arthur in history are vague or lacking altogether, so that many persons have doubted that such a king ever lived. Caxton, who printed an edition of Malory's version of the King Arthur stories in 1485, said in his introduction :—

Divers men hold opinion that there was no such Arthur, and that all such books as be made of him be but feigned and fables, because that some chronicles make of him no mention, nor remember him nothing, nor of his knights. . . . [But] there were many evidences of the contrary. First, ye may see his sepulchre in the monastery of Glastonbury. . . . And in divers places of England, many remembrances be yet of him, and shall remain perpetually, and also of his knights : — First, in the Abbey of Westminster, at Saint Edward's shrine, remaineth the print of his seal in red wax closed in beryl, in which is written : “ *Patricius Arthurus Britannie, Gallie, Germanie, Dacie Imperator.* ”¹ Item, in the castle of Dover, ye may see Gawaine's skull; at Winchester, the Round Table; in other places, Launcelot's sword, and many other things. Then all these things considered, there can no man reasonably gainsay but there was a king of this land named Arthur.

Arthur
a real
character

Modern scholars, on the whole, have been led to believe in a real Arthur, but an Arthur who was a successful general rather than the magnificent king pictured by Malory in his “ *Morte Darthur.* ” Mr. Maynadier says of him :—

¹ Sir Arthur, ruler of Britain, Gaul, Germany, and Dacia.

Arthur was probably not of royal blood ; he was only a brave leader, perhaps one of considerable military genius, though we may suppose of comparatively slight civilisation, a half-barbarous chieftain, attached to the party of Britons who had viewed with joy the departure of the [Roman] legions.¹

However that may be, the King Arthur whose wonderful exploits are portrayed in this book is a real person to the one whose imagination will permit him to enter into the spirit of this marvelous story upon which is based so much of our choice literature.

¹ Howard Maynadier, *The Arthur of the English Poets*.

KING ARTHUR STORIES FROM MALORY

BOOK I THE STORY OF ARTHUR

CHAPTER I

WHICH TELLETH OF UTHER AND IGRAYNE

IT befell in the days of Uther Pendragon, when he was king of all England, that there was a mighty duke¹ in Cornwall that made war against him a long time; and the duke was called the Duke of Tintagil. And this duke had a wife, a fair lady and passing wise, and her name was Igraine. Now Uther sent for this duke and bade him bring his wife with him. And the messengers had their answer, and that was this: that neither the duke nor his wife would come. Then was the king wroth, and he sent the duke plain word to be ready; for within forty days he would fetch him out of the biggest castle that he had.

¹ After the coming of the Saxons, England was divided into a great many petty kingdoms, which were constantly at war with one another. Each kingdom was ruled by a *duke* and contained many large estates under the control of barons. Vast companies of knights owed allegiance to the barons, who, in their turn, were bound to defend the duke and the king against attack.

When the duke had this warning, anon he went and furnished two strong castles, the one hight Tintagil, and the other Terrabil. And his wife Dame Igraine he put in the castle of Tintagil, and himself he put in the castle of Terrabil. Then in all haste came Uther with a great host, and laid siege to the castle of Terrabil. And there he put up many pavilions, and great war was made on both parties, and many people were slain. But the Duke of Tintagil espied the king one day riding from the siege of Terrabil, and therefore that night he issued out of the castle at a postern to attack the king's host. And so, through his own folly, the duke was slain.

Now, after this, when Uther saw the lady Igraine, he loved her well, and wished to make her his queen; and the barons by one assent prayed him to take the lady to wife. So the king entrusted Ulfius to make a treaty between them; and at last the king and she met together, and they were married with mirth and joy.

CHAPTER II

OF THE BIRTH OF ARTHUR AND THE DEATH OF UTHER

AND in the spring of the year a son was born to King Uther and Queen Igraine. Then the

great enchanter Merlin¹ came unto the king and said, "Sir, you must provide for the nourishing of your child."

"It shall be as thou wilt," said the king.

"Well," said Merlin, "I know a lord of yours in this land that is a faithful man and passing true, and he shall have the nourishing of your child. His name is Sir Ector, and he is a lord of fair livelihood in many parts of England and Wales. Let this lord be sent for to come and speak with you, and desire him, as he loveth you, to take this child."

So, as Merlin advised, it was done. Then the king commanded two knights and two ladies to take the child, bound in a cloth of gold, and deliver him to the poor man at the postern gate of the castle. So the child was delivered unto Merlin, and he bare it forth unto Sir Ector, and made a holy man to christen him, and named him Arthur.

Then within two years, King Uther fell sick of a great malady. In the meanwhile his enemies usurped upon his lands, and slew many of his people. And Merlin came unto him and said, "Sir, you may not lie as you do: you must go to the field though you ride on a horse-litter; for you shall never have the better of your enemies unless

¹ A famous enchanter who was supposed to know the past, present, and future. He was the constant friend and adviser of King Arthur, and did many wonderful things for him. The Round Table is said to have been made by Merlin.

you meet them in person. And then shall you have the victory."

So it was done as Merlin had advised, and they carried the king forth in a horse-litter with a great host toward his enemies. And at St. Albans, there met with the king a great host from the North. And that day Sir Ulfius and Sir Brastias did great deeds of arms,¹ and King Uther's men won the Northern battle and slew many people, and put the remnant to flight. And then the king returned unto London, and made great joy of his victory.

Then again he fell passing sore sick, so that three days and three nights he was speechless; wherefore all the barons made great sorrow, and asked Merlin what counsel were best.

"There is no remedy," said Merlin; "but God will have His will. But look you all, barons, be before King Uther to-morrow morning, and God and I shall make him speak."

So on the morn, all the barons with Merlin came before the king; then Merlin said aloud unto King Uther, "Sir, shall your son Arthur be king of this realm after your days?"

¹ The system of knighthood of Arthur's time was known as chivalry. The fundamental principles of chivalry were gentleness, courtesy, gallantry, bravery, and a high estimate of all women. It was the duty of chivalry to uphold the good and to punish evil; to defend the old and helpless; to protect and honor women and children. The knights were always heavily encased in armor, and the battles they fought in sport or in the fulfillment of their chivalrous vows were known as *deeds* or *feats of arms*.

And Uther Pendragon turned and said, in hearing of them all, “I give him God’s blessing and mine, and bid him pray for my soul, and righteously and worshipfully wish him to claim the crown upon forfeiture of my blessing.”

And therewith he yielded up the ghost. Then was he interred as befitted a king; and the queen, fair Igraine, and all the barons made great sorrow.

CHAPTER III

HOW ARTHUR DREW THE SWORD FROM THE STONE

FOR a long while after Uther’s death, the realm stood in great jeopardy; for every lord that was mighty of men tried to become king. Then Merlin went to the Archbishop of Canterbury¹ and counselled him to send for all the lords of the realm and all the gentlemen of arms, to come to London by Christmas upon pain of cursing. For, he said, Jesus that was born on that night would of His great mercy show by some miracle who should be the rightful king of this realm. So the archbishop did as Merlin had advised, and all the lords and gentlemen of arms came by Christ-

¹ *Canterbury* means “City of Kent.” A wonderful old cathedral is there, and the *archbishop* who lives there is the head of the English Church.

mas unto London. And many of them confessed their sins that their prayer might be the more acceptable unto God. So long before day, all those who came were in the greatest church of London to pray.

And when matins and the first mass were done, there was seen in the churchyard against the high altar a great stone four feet square, like unto a marble stone. And in the midst thereof was an anvil of steel a foot high, and therein stuck a fair sword, and letters there were written in gold about the sword that said thus: —

“Whoso pulleth out this sword of this stone and anvil, is rightwise king born of all England.”

Then the people marvelled and told it to the archbishop. “I command,” said the archbishop, “that ye keep within your church, and pray unto God still; that no man touch the sword till the high mass be all done.”

So when all masses were done, all the lords went to behold the stone and the sword. And when they saw the scripture, some who would have been king essayed to pull the sword. But none might stir the sword nor move it.

“He is not here,” said the archbishop, “that shall achieve the sword, but doubt not God will make him known. But this is my counsel, that we provide ten knights, men of good fame, to keep this sword.”

So the ten knights were appointed, but then there was made a cry that every man should essay to pull the sword that wished to.

Upon New Year's Day the barons made a joust and a tournament,¹ that all knights that would joust or tourney there might play. And all this was ordained to keep the lords and commons together; for the archbishop trusted that God would make known him that should win the sword.

So upon New Year's Day, when the service was done, the barons rode unto the field, some to joust and some to tourney. And so it happened that Sir Ector, that had great estates about London, rode unto the jousts; and with him rode Sir Kay, his son, and young Arthur that was his foster-brother.

Now, as they rode to the jousts, Sir Kay found that he had left his sword at his father's lodging; and he prayed young Arthur to ride back for it.

¹ As it was the profession of the knight to fight, so it was his amusement. Very often, by way of celebrating some important event, a trial at arms would be arranged. Such a trial, or *tournament*, or *joust*, would usually be held in a great open space, with kings and queens, lords and ladies, as spectators. The knights fought on horseback with swords and spears and battle-axes, and he was accounted the victor who could unhorse the greatest number of opponents. The joust differed from the tourney in that the former was a contest between two knights, and there might be any number of knights engaged in the latter. See "Launcelot and Elaine," chap. ii, page 129.

“I will gladly go,” said Arthur; and he rode fast after the sword.

When he came home, the lady and all had gone out to see the jousting. Then was Arthur wroth and said to himself, “I will ride to the churchyard and take the sword with me that sticketh in the stone, for my brother Sir Kay shall not be without a sword this day.”

So when he came to the churchyard, Sir Arthur alighted and tied his horse to the stile. Then he went to the tent, but found no knights there, for they were all at the jousting. So he took the sword by the handle, and lightly and fiercely pulled it out of the stone; then he took his horse and rode his way until he came to his brother Sir Kay, and delivered him the sword.

CHAPTER IV

HOW NONE MIGHT PULL OUT THE SWORD BUT ARTHUR

Now as soon as Sir Kay saw the sword, he wist well it was the sword of the stone, and so he rode to his father Sir Ector, and said, “Sir, lo! here is the sword of the stone; wherefore, I must be king of this land.”

When Sir Ector beheld the sword, he took his sons and returned again to the church; and then they alighted all three, and went into the church.

And anon he made Sir Kay swear upon a book how he came by that sword.

“Sir,” said Sir Kay, “by my brother Arthur, for he brought it to me.”

“How gat you this sword?” said Sir Ector to Arthur.

“Sir, I will tell you. When I came home for my brother’s sword, I found nobody at home to deliver it to me, and as I thought my brother Sir Kay should not be swordless, I came hither eagerly and pulled it out of the stone without any effort.”

“Found you any knights about this sword?” said Sir Ector.

“Nay,” said Arthur.

“Now,” said Sir Ector to Arthur, “I understand you must be king of this land.”

“Wherefore I,” said Arthur, “and for what cause?”

“Sir,” said Ector, “because God will have it so; for no man ever could have drawn out this sword but he that shall be rightful king of this land. Now let me see whether you can put the sword there as it was, and pull it out again.”

“That is easily done,” said Arthur; and so he put it in the stone. And herewith Sir Ector essayed to pull out the sword and failed.

“Now essay,” said Sir Ector unto Sir Kay. And anon he pulled at the sword with all his might, but he could not move it. “Now shall you essay,” said Sir Ector to Arthur.

“I will,” said Arthur; and pulled it out easily. And therewithal Sir Ector and Sir Kay knelt down to the earth.

“Alas,” said Arthur, “my own dear father and brother, why kneel ye to me?”

“Nay, nay, my lord Arthur, it is not so; I was never your father nor of your blood, but I wot well that you are of higher blood than I weened you were.”

And then Sir Ector told him all the story of his life, and Arthur sorrowed greatly when he understood that Sir Ector was not his father.

“Sir,” said Sir Ector unto Arthur, “will you be my good and gracious lord when you are king?”

“If I were not, then were I to blame,” said Arthur; “for you are the man in the world I am most beholden to. And if ever it be God’s will that I be king, as ye say, God forbid I should fail you.”

“Sir,” said Ector, “I will ask no more of you, but that you will make my son, your foster-brother Sir Kay, seneschal of your lands.”

“That shall be done,” said Arthur, “and more, by the faith of my body; for no man shall have that office but he while he and I live.”

Therewithal they went unto the archbishop, and told him how the sword was achieved and by whom; and on Twelfth-day all the barons came thither to essay to take the sword. But there none might take it out but Arthur. Wherefore

there were many lords wroth ; and they said it was great shame unto them all and unto the realm to be over-governed by a boy born of no high blood. And they fell out at that time, so that trial was put off till Candlemas, and then all the barons were to meet there again. But always the ten knights were ordained to watch the sword day and night ; and so they set a pavilion over the stone and the sword, and five always watched.

CHAPTER V

HOW ARTHUR WAS PROCLAIMED KING

THEN at Candlemas many more great lords came thither to win the sword, but none was successful. And as Arthur did at Christmas, so did he at Candlemas, and pulled out the sword easily ; whereof the barons were sore aggrieved, and put off the trial again till the high feast of Easter. And as Arthur succeeded before, so did he at Easter. Yet there were some of the great lords who had great indignation that Arthur should be king, and put it off again till the feast of Pentecost.

Then the Archbishop of Canterbury, by Merlin's counsel, provided some of the best knights that they could get, — such knights as Uther Pendragon loved best and most trusted in his days. Such knights were put about Arthur, as Sir Baudwin of Britain, Sir Kay, Sir Ulfius, and

Sir Brastias. All these with many others were always about Arthur, day and night, till the feast of Pentecost.

And at the feast of Pentecost all manner of men essayed to pull the sword, but none might prevail but Arthur, and he pulled it out before all the lords and commons that were there. Then all the commons cried at once, "We will have Arthur for our king; we will delay no more, for we all see that it is God's will that he shall be our king. And we will slay him who holdeth against it." And therewith they all kneeled at once, both rich and poor, and cried mercy from Arthur because they had delayed so long.

And Arthur forgave them, and took the sword in both hands, and offered it on the altar where the archbishop was, and so he was made knight over the best man that was there. And then anon was the coronation made. And there was he sworn unto his lords and the commons to be a true king, and to stand with true justice from thenceforth all the days of his life.

CHAPTER VI

HOW GRIFLET FOUGHT THE KNIGHT AT THE FOUNTAIN AND WAS GRIEVOUSLY WOUNDED

ONE day there came into King Arthur's court a squire on horseback bearing a knight mortally

wounded. And the squire said unto King Arthur, "There is a knight in the forest who hath reared up a pavilion by a well and hath slain my master, Sir Miles, a good knight; wherefore I beseech you that my master may be buried, and that some knight may avenge his death."

Then the tidings of that knight's death were spread throughout the court, and every man gave his advice.

Then came Griflet, who was but a young squire of the age of King Arthur, and besought the king for all the service he had done him to give him the order of knighthood.

"Thou art full young and tender of age," said Arthur, "to take so high an order on thee."

"Sir," said Griflet, "I beseech you to make me knight."

"Sir," said Merlin, "it were great pity to lose Griflet, for he will be a passing good man when he is of age, and will abide with you the term of his life. And if he risk his body with yonder knight at the fountain, it is doubtful if he ever come again; for that knight is one of the best knights of the world, and the strongest man of arms."

"It is so," said Arthur; but, at the desire of Griflet, he made him knight.

"Now," said Arthur unto Sir Griflet, "since I have made thee knight, give thou me a gift."

"What you will," said Griflet.

Then said Arthur, "You shall promise me by the faith of your body that in your jousting with the knight at the fountain, if you fall, you shall straightway come again unto me without any more debate."

"I promise you," said Griflet.

Then Griflet took his horse in great haste, and dressed his shield, and took a spear in his hand, and rode at a great gallop till he came to the fountain. And nearby he saw a rich pavilion ; and under a shelter stood a fair horse well saddled and bridled, and on a tree hung a shield of divers colours and a great spear. Then Griflet smote on the shield with the butt of his spear so that the shield fell to the ground.

With that the knight came out of the pavilion, and said, "Fair knight, why smote you down my shield?"

"Because I will joust with you," said Griflet.

"It is better that you do not," said the knight, "for you are but young, and your might is nothing to mine."

"Notwithstanding that," said Griflet, "I will joust with you."

"I am loath to do it," said the knight, "but since I must needs, I will do so. Whence do you come?"

"Sir, I am of Arthur's court," said Griflet.

So the two knights ran together so fiercely that Griflet's spear was all shivered in pieces ; and the

knight smote Griflet through the shield and the left side, and brake the spear so that the truncheon stuck in his body and the horse and knight fell down. When the knight of the fountain saw him lie so on the ground, he alighted and was passing heavy, for he weened he had slain Griflet. He unlaced his helm to give him air, and then set him on his horse, and commended him to God. And he said he had a mighty heart, and if he might live, he would prove a passing good knight.

And so Sir Griflet rode to the court of Arthur, where there was great sorrow for him, but through good leeches he was healed and saved.

CHAPTER VII

OF ARTHUR'S FIGHT WITH THE KNIGHT AT THE FOUNTAIN

WHEN King Arthur saw Griflet's plight, he commanded a privy man of his chamber to have his best horse and armour without the city before daylight the next morning. And there at the time appointed, he met with his man and his horse, and so mounted up and dressed his shield and took his spear and bade his chamberlain tarry there till he came again.

And then Arthur rode a mild pace till it was day, when suddenly he saw three churls chasing Merlin with intent to slay him.

Then the king rode unto them, and said, “Flee, churls!” And they were afraid when they saw a knight, and fled.

“O Merlin,” said Arthur, “here hadst thou been slain in spite of all thy crafts, had I not been here.”

“Nay,” said Merlin, “not so; for I could save myself if I would. Thou art more near thy death than I am, for thou goest deathward if God be not thy friend.”

So as they went talking thus, they came to the fountain and the rich pavilion there by it. Then King Arthur saw an armed knight sitting in a chair. “Sir knight,” said Arthur, “for what cause abidest thou here, that no knight may ride this way but that he joust with thee? I advise thee to leave that custom.”

“This custom,” said the knight, “have I used and will use in spite of him who saith nay; and if any one is grieved with my custom, let him amend it.”

“I will amend it,” said Arthur.

“I shall prevent that,” said the knight.

Anon he took his horse and dressed his shield and took a spear, and their spears met so hard on each other’s shields that they were shivered in pieces. Therewith anon Arthur pulled out his sword.

“Nay, not so,” said the knight; “it is fairer that we twain run more together with sharp spears.”

“I would gladly,” said Arthur, “if I had any more spears.”

“I have enough,” said the knight.

So there came a squire and brought two good spears, and Arthur chose one and he another. Then they spurred their horses and came together with all their might, so that both broke their spears to the handles. Then Arthur set hand on his sword.

“Nay,” said the knight, “you shall do better. You are as good a jouster as ever I met withal, and for the love of the high order of knighthood let us joust once again.”

“I am willing,” said Arthur.

Anon there were brought two great spears and each knight selected a spear. And therewith they ran together so that Arthur’s spear was shivered to pieces. But the other knight hit him so hard in the midst of the shield that horse and man fell to earth, and therewith Arthur pulled out his sword and said, “I will fight thee, sir knight, on foot, for I have lost the honour on horseback.”

“I will continue on horseback,” said the knight.

Then was Arthur wroth and he went toward him with his sword drawn. When the knight saw that, he alighted from his horse, and dressed his shield toward Arthur; for he thought it no honour to have a knight at such advantage.

And there began a strong battle with many

great strokes, and they hewed with their swords so that cantels of armour flew into the fields, and the place where they fought was covered with blood. Thus they fought long; then they rested themselves, and went to the battle again and hurtled together like two rams. And so at last they smote together, so that both their swords met even. But the sword of the knight smote King Arthur's sword in two pieces; wherefore he was sorrowful.

Then said the knight unto Arthur, "Thou art in my power, and I can save thee or slay thee. Now if thou dost not yield thyself as overcome and recreant thou shalt die."

"As for death," said King Arthur, "welcome be it when it cometh, but I would rather die than to be so shamed as to yield myself unto thee as recreant."

And therewithal the king leapt unto the knight, and took him by the middle and threw him down. Then he cut off his helm, and saw that the knight was Pellinore. Now Pellinore was a passing big man of might, and anon he brought Arthur under him and cut off his helm and would have smitten off his head.

Therewith came Merlin and said, "Knight, hold thy hand; for if thou slay that knight, thou shalt put this realm in the greatest sorrow that it was ever in; for that knight is a man of more worship than thou knowest of."

“Why, who is he?” said Pellinore.

“He is King Arthur,” answered Merlin.

Then would Pellinore have slain him for dread of his wrath. So he raised his sword, but therewith Merlin cast an enchantment on him so that he fell to the earth in a great sleep. Then Merlin took up King Arthur and rode away with him.

“Alas!” said Arthur, “what have you done, Merlin? Have you slain this good knight by your crafts? There liveth not so worshipful a knight as he was.”

“Care not,” said Merlin, “for he is not so near death as you are. He is but asleep and will awake within three hours. I told you what a knight he was. You would have been slain had I not been here. Also, there liveth not a bigger knight than he is, and he shall hereafter do you right good service.”

CHAPTER VIII

HOW ARTHUR GAT THE SWORD EXCALIBUR OF THE LADY OF THE LAKE

WHEN the king and he departed, they went unto a hermit that was a good man and a great leech. So the hermit searched all his wounds and gave him good salves. The king was there three days: and then were his wounds so well healed that he might ride, and so he departed.

And as he and Merlin rode, Arthur said, "I have no sword."

"No matter," said Merlin, "nearby is a sword that shall be yours if I can get it for you."

So they rode till they came to a fair and broad lake; and in the middle of the lake Arthur saw an arm clothed in white samite, and in the hand was held a fair sword. "Lo!" said Merlin, "yonder is that sword that I spake of."

With that they saw a damsels walking upon the lake.

"What damsels is that?" said Arthur.

"That is the Lady of the Lake," said Merlin. "Within that lake is a rock, and therein is as fair a place as any on earth. This damsels will come to you anon; and then speak you gently to her and ask her to give that sword to you."

Anon came the damsels unto Arthur, and saluted him; and he saluted her.

"Damsel," said Arthur, "what sword is that that yonder arm holdeth above the water? I would it were mine, for I have no sword."

"Sir Arthur, King," said the damsels, "that sword is mine, and if you will give me a gift when I ask it, you shall have the sword."

"By my faith," said Arthur, "I will give you what gift you shall ask."

"Well," said the damsels, "go into yonder barge and row yourself to the sword and take it and the

scabbard with you, and I will ask my gift when I see my time."

So Sir Arthur and Merlin alighted and tied their horses to two trees; and they went into the ship. When they came to the sword that the hand held, Sir Arthur took it up by the handles and took it with him, and the arm and the hand went under the water. And so they came again unto the land and rode forth on their way.

Then Arthur looked on the sword and liked it passing well.

"Which do you like better," said Merlin, "the sword or the scabbard?"

"I like the sword better," said Arthur.

"You are unwise," said Merlin, "for the scabbard is worth ten of the sword; for while you have the scabbard upon you, you shall never lose blood, be you ever so sorely wounded; therefore always keep the scabbard with you."

Then they came unto Carlion and the knights were passing glad. And when they heard of Arthur's adventures, they marvelled that he would jeopard his person so alone. But all men of worship said it was merry to be under a chieftain who would put his person in adventure as other poor knights did.

CHAPTER IX

HOW ARTHUR DECIDED TO TAKE GUENEVER TO
WIFE, AND RECEIVED THE ROUND TABLE

IN the beginning of Arthur, after he was chosen king by adventure and by grace, most of the barons knew not that he was Uther Pendragon's son, until Merlin made it openly known. Then many kings and lords made great war against him for that cause; but Arthur overcame them all, for the most part of the days of his life he was ruled much by the counsel of Merlin.

So it befell that King Arthur said unto Merlin, "My barons will let me have no rest until I take a wife, and I will take none but by thy counsel and by thy advice."

"It is well," said Merlin, "that you take a wife; for a man of your attainments and nobility should not be without a wife. Now is there any that you love more than another?"

"Yea," said King Arthur, "I love Guenever, daughter of King Leodegrance of the land of Cameliard. This damsel is the most valiant and the fairest lady that I know living, or that ever I could find."

"Sir," said Merlin, "as for her beauty and fairness, she is one of the fairest on earth; but if you did not love her so well as you do, I should find you a damsel of beauty and of goodness that

should like you and please you ; but when a man's heart is set, he is loath to change."

" That is truth," said King Arthur.

Then Merlin sent forth unto King Leode-



KING ARTHUR'S ROUND TABLE

A work of art, in Winchester Castle, of doubtful date, 1235-1425

grance of Cameliard and told him of the desire of King Arthur to have Guenever for his wife.

" That is to me," said King Leodegrance, " the best tidings that I ever heard, — that so worthy a king of prowess and noblesse will wed my daugh-

ter. And as far as my lands, I would give him all if I thought it would please him, but he hath lands enough and needeth none. But I shall send him a gift which shall please him much more; for I shall give him the Round Table, which his father, Uther Pendragon, gave me. When it is full complete, there are one hundred and fifty knights. An hundred good knights I have myself; but I lack fifty, for so many have been slain in my days."

And so Leodegrance delivered his daughter Guenever unto Merlin, and the Round Table with the hundred knights. And they rode freshly with great royalty till they came nigh unto London.

When King Arthur heard of the coming of Guenever and the hundred knights with the Round Table, he made great joy and said openly, "This fair lady is passing welcome unto me, for I have loved her long, and therefore there is nothing so much to my liking. And these knights with the Round Table please me more than great riches."

And in all haste the king prepared for the marriage and the coronation in the most honourable fashion that could be devised.

CHAPTER X

HOW THE SIEGES OF THE ROUND TABLE WERE
FILLED BY MERLIN

“Now, Merlin,” said King Arthur, “go thou and find me in all this land fifty knights which are of most prowess and worship.”

Within a short time Merlin had found knights to fill twenty and eight sieges, but no more he could find. Then the Bishop of Canterbury was fetched, and he blessed the sieges with great royalty and devotion, and there set the eight and twenty knights. And when this was done Merlin said, “Fair sirs, you must all arise, and come to King Arthur to do him homage; for he will then have the better will to maintain you.”

And so they arose and did their homage. And when they were gone, Merlin found in every siege letters of gold that told the knight’s name that had sat therein. But two sieges were void.

“What is the cause,” said King Arthur, “that there be two places void in the sieges?”

“Sir,” said Merlin, “there shall no man sit in those places but him that shall be of most worship. But in the Siege Perilous there shall no man sit but one, and if there be any other so hardy as to sit there, he shall be destroyed.”

And therewith Merlin took King Pellinore by the hand, and put him in the place next the two

sieges and the Siege Perilous, and he said before them all, "This is your place, for you are most worthy to sit therein of all who are here."

Thereat Sir Gawaine was passing envious, and said to Gaheris, his brother, "Yonder knight is put to great worship, and this grieveth me sore: for he slew our father King Lot; therefore I will slay him."

"You shall not do it," said Gaheris, "at this time, for I now am but a squire; but when I am made knight I will be avenged on him. Therefore, brother, it is best that you suffer till another time, that we may have him out of the court, lest we should trouble this high feast."

"I will do as you say," said Gawaine.

There the king established all his knights, and those that had no lands he made rich in lands. And he charged them never to do outrage or murder, and always to flee treason. Also, by no means to be cruel, but to give mercy unto him that asked it, upon pain of forfeiture of their worship and lordship of King Arthur for evermore; and always to give succour unto ladies, damsels, and gentlewomen, upon pain of death. Also that no man make battle in a wrongful quarrel, either for any law or this world's goods. Unto this oath were all the knights of the Round Table sworn, both old and young. And every year were they sworn anew at the feast of Pentecost.

And then when all this was done, the high feast was made ready, and King Arthur was wedded at Camelot unto Dame Guenever in the church of Saint Stephens with much solemnity.

CHAPTER XI

HOW ARTHUR, KING URIENS, AND SIR ACCOLON OF GAUL CHASED A HART AND CAME TO A MARVELLOUS SHIP

It befell on a day that Arthur and many of his knights rode a-hunting into a great forest; and it happened that King Arthur, King Uriens, and Sir Accolon of Gaul, followed a great hart. They three were well horsed, and so they chased so fast that within a while they three were ten miles from their fellowship. And at the last they chased so hard that their horses fell underneath them. Then were they all three on foot, and they saw the hart before them passing weary and am-bushed.

“What shall we do?” said King Arthur. “We are in a hard plight.”

“Let us go on foot,” said King Uriens, “till we may meet with some lodging.”

Then were they aware of the hart that lay on a great water bank, and a hound biting on his throat, and other hounds coming after. Then

King Arthur blew the hunting-horn, and killed the hart.

Then the king looked about him and saw before him in a great body of water a little ship all apparelled with silk down to the water, and the ship came right unto them and landed on the sands. Then Arthur went to the ship and looked, and saw no earthly creature therein.

“Sirs,” said the king, “come hither, and let us see what is in this ship.”

So they went in all three, and found it richly hung with cloth of silk. By then it was dark night, and there suddenly were about them an hundred torches set upon all the sides of the ship, which gave great light. And therewithal there came out twelve fair damsels and saluted King Arthur on their knees, and called him by his name and said he was right welcome and that, of such cheer as they had, he should have the best. The king thanked them fair.

Therewithal they led the king and his two fellows into a fair chamber, and there was a cloth laid, richly provided with all that belonged unto a table, and there were they served with all the wines and meats they could think of. At that the king greatly marvelled, for he had never fared better in his life at one supper. And so when they had supped at their leisure, King Arthur was led into a chamber; a richer appointed chamber he had never seen. And King Uriens was served

and led into another such chamber. And Sir Accolon was led into the third chamber, passing richly apparelled ; and so they were laid in their beds easily. And anon they fell asleep and slept marvellously well all the night.

CHAPTER XII

OF SIR DAMAS AND SIR ONTZLAKE, AND HOW ARTHUR AGREED TO FIGHT FOR SIR DAMAS AND FREE THE IMPRISONED KNIGHTS

ON the morrow, King Uriens found himself in his own bed in Camelot. And when he awoke he marvelled greatly how he came there; for on the evening before he was two days' journey from Camelot.

And when King Arthur awoke, he found himself in a dark prison, hearing about him many complaints of woeful knights.

“What are ye that so complain ?” said King Arthur.

“We are twenty knights, prisoners,” said they, “and some of us have lain here seven years, and some more and some less.”

“For what cause ?” said Arthur.

“We shall tell you,” said the knights ; “this lord of this castle— his name is Sir Damas—is the falsest knight that liveth, and full of treason, and as great a coward as any that liveth. And

he hath a younger brother, a good knight of prowess, whose name is Sir Ontzlake. And this traitor Damas, the elder brother, will give him no part of his livelihood ; but Sir Ontzlake keepeth from him a full fair manor and a rich one. In this manor Sir Ontzlake dwelleth worshipfully, and is well beloved of all people. And this Sir Damas, our master, is as evil beloved, for he is without mercy and he is a coward. And great wars have been fought between them ; but Ontzlake hath always won. And ever he offereth to fight Sir Damas for the livelihood, body for body, or else he demands that Sir Damas find a knight to fight for him. Sir Damas has agreed to find a knight, but he is so evil beloved and hated that there is never a knight will fight for him. And since Damas hath seen this, he hath daily lain in wait with many knights, and taken all the knights in this country by force, and brought them to his prison. And so he took us separately as we rode on our adventures. And many good knights have died in this prison from hunger to the number of eighteen knights. If any of us all that are here, or have been here, would have fought with his brother Ontzlake, he would have delivered us ; but because this Damas is so false and so full of treason, we would never fight for him. And we are so lean for hunger that we may scarcely stand on our feet."

"God deliver us, for his mercy," said Arthur.

Anon therewithal there came a damsel unto Arthur and asked him, "What cheer?"

"I cannot say," said he.

"Sir," said she, "if you will fight for my lord, you shall be delivered out of prison, otherwise you shall not escape with your life."

"Now," said Arthur, "that is hard, yet I would rather fight with a knight than die in prison. Shall I and all these prisoners be delivered if I do the battle?"

"Yes," said the damsel.

"I am ready," said Arthur, "if I had horse and armour."

"You shall lack none," said the damsel.

"It seems to me, damsel, I have seen you in the court of Arthur."

"Nay," said the damsel, "I came never there, I am daughter of the lord of this castle."

Yet was she false, for she was one of the damsels of Morgan le Fay. Anon she went unto Sir Damas, and told him how Arthur would do battle for him; and so Sir Damas sent for Arthur. And when he came, he was so well conditioned, and so well made of his limbs, that all knights that saw him said it were pity that such a knight should die in prison. So Sir Damas and he were agreed that he should fight for him upon this covenant — that all other knights should be delivered. Unto that was Sir Damas sworn by Arthur and Arthur by Sir Damas to do the battle to the uttermost.

And with that all the twenty knights were brought out of the dark prison into the hall, and delivered, and so they all abode to see the battle.

CHAPTER XIII

OF WHAT HAPPENED TO SIR ACCOLON

Now turn we unto Accolon of Gaul. When he awoke he found himself by a deep well-side, within half a foot of it and in great peril of death. And there came out of that fountain a pipe of silver, and out of that pipe ran water all on high into a basin of marble. When Sir Accolon saw this, he blessed him, and said, "Jesus, save my lord, King Arthur, and King Uriens, for these damsels in this ship have betrayed us. They were devils and no women ; and if I may escape this misadventure, I shall destroy all these false damsels that I may find that use enchantments."

With that there came a dwarf with a great mouth and a flat nose, who saluted Sir Accolon, and said, "I come from Queen Morgan le Fay,¹ and she greeteth you well, and biddeth you be of strong heart, for you shall fight to-morrow with a knight at the hour of prime. Therefore she

¹ Daughter of Igraine and sister of Arthur. She was the pupil of Merlin, and learned many magic arts from him. See "Balin and Balan," chap. xiii, p. 65.

hath sent you here Excalibur, Arthur's sword, and the scabbard, and she biddeth you as you love her, that you do the battle to the uttermost, without any mercy, like as you had promised her when ye spake together in private; and the damsel that bringeth her the knight's head, which you shall fight withal, she will make her a queen."

"Now I understand you well," said Accolon; "when saw you my lady, Queen Morgan le Fay?"

"Right late," said the dwarf.

Then Accolon took him in his arms and said, "Recommend me unto my lady queen, and tell her all shall be done that I have promised her, else will I die for it. Now I suppose," said Accolon, "she hath made all these crafts and enchantments for this battle."

"You may well believe it," said the dwarf.

Anon there came a knight and lady with six squires, and saluted Accolon, and prayed him to arise and come and rest him at their manor. And so Accolon mounted upon a spare horse, and went with the knight unto a fair manor by a priory, and there he had passing good cheer.

CHAPTER XIV

**HOW ARTHUR AND SIR ACCOLON FOUGHT, AND
HOW NIMUE CAME TO ARTHUR'S RESCUE**

Now after King Arthur and Sir Damas had sworn unto each other, then Sir Damas sent unto his brother Sir Ontzlake, and bade him to make ready by the next morn at the hour of prime, to be in the field to fight with a good knight; for he had found a good knight that was ready to do battle. When this word came unto Sir Ontzlake he was passing heavy, for he had been wounded a little before through both his thighs with a spear; but as he was wounded he could not fight the battle.

Now it happened at that time, by the means of Morgan le Fay, Accolon was lodged with Sir Ontzlake; and when he heard of that battle and how Ontzlake was wounded, he said that he would fight for him because Morgan le Fay had sent him Excalibur and the sheath to fight with the knight on the morn: and this was the reason Sir Accolon took the battle on hand. Then Sir Ontzlake was passing glad, and thanked Sir Accolon with all his heart that he would do so much for him. And therewithal Sir Ontzlake sent word unto his brother Sir Damas that he had a knight that should be ready for him in the field by the hour of prime.

So on the morn, Sir Arthur was armed and well horsed, and he asked Sir Damas, "When shall we to the field?"

"Sir," said Sir Damas, "you shall hear mass first."

And so Arthur heard a mass, and when mass was done there came a squire on a great horse and asked Sir Damas if his knight were ready, saying that the other knight was ready in the field.

Then Sir Arthur mounted upon horseback, and went unto the field, and there were all the knights and commons of that country. And so there were chosen twelve good men of the country to wait upon the two knights. And as soon as Arthur was on horseback there came a damsel from Morgan le Fay and brought unto Sir Arthur a sword like unto Excalibur, and the scabbard, and said unto Arthur, "Morgan le Fay, for the great love she beareth you, sendeth here your sword." And he thanked her and thought it was so; but she was false, for the sword and the scabbard were counterfeit, and brittle and false.

And then the knights dressed their shields toward each other, and let their horses run so fast that either smote other in the midst of the shield with his spear-head, and both horse and man went to the earth; and then they both started up and pulled out their swords.

Meanwhile, when they were thus at the battle, Nimue, the Lady of the Lake, came into the field;

and she came thither for love of King Arthur, for she knew how Morgan le Fay had ordained that King Arthur should be slain that day, and therefore she came to save his life.

And so they went eagerly to the battle and gave many great strokes, but never did Arthur's sword bite like Accolon's sword ; but for the most part every stroke that Accolon gave wounded Arthur sore, so that it was marvellous that he stood at all ; and always his blood fell from him fast. When Arthur beheld the ground so covered with blood he was dismayed ; and then he deemed that his sword was changed ; for his sword bit not the steel as it was wont to do. And it seemed as if the sword in Accolon's hand were Excalibur, for every stroke that Accolon struck drew blood from Arthur.

“Now, knight,” said Accolon unto Arthur, “keep away well from me.”

But Arthur answered not, but gave him such a buffet on the helmet that it made him stoop, and nigh fall down to the earth. Then Sir Accolon withdrew a little and came on with Excalibur raised on high, and smote Sir Arthur such a buffet that he fell nigh to the death. Then were they both wroth and gave each other many sore strokes, and always Sir Arthur lost so much blood that it was marvellous that he stood on his feet ; but he was so full of knighthood that knightly he endured the pain.

Sir Accolon lost not a drop of blood, therefore he waxed passing strong, but Sir Arthur was passing feeble, and was near death ; but for all that he kept a cheerful countenance and held Accolon as short as he might. But Accolon was so bold because of Excalibur that he waxed passing hardy. But all men that beheld him said they never saw knight fight so well as Arthur did, considering the blood that he bled. So were all the people sorry for him, but the two brethren (Damas and Ontzlake) would not accord.

Then Accolon and Arthur fought together as fierce knights, and Sir Arthur withdrew a little to rest himself, but Sir Accolon called him to battle and said, "It is no time for me to suffer thee to rest." And therewith he came fiercely upon Arthur, and Sir Arthur was wroth for the blood he had lost, and smote Accolon on top of the helmet so mightily that he made him nigh fall to the earth ; and therewith Arthur's sword broke at the cross and fell in the grass amidst the blood, and the pommel and the handle he held in his hands.

When Sir Arthur saw that, he was in great fear to die, but always he held up his shield, and lost no ground and bated no cheer.

Then Sir Accolon began with words of treason, and said, "Knight, thou art overcome, and mayst not endure, and also thou art weaponless, and thou hast lost much of thy blood, and I am

full loath to slay thee, therefore yield to me as recreant."

"Nay," said Sir Arthur, "I may not do so, for I have promised to do the battle to the uttermost, and therefore I would rather die with honour than live with shame. And if it were possible for me to die an hundred times, I would rather do so than yield myself to thee; for though I lack weapon, I shall lack no honour, and if thou slay me weaponless, that shall be thy shame."

"Well," said Accolon, "I will risk the shame; now keep thee from me, for thou art but a dead man." And therewith Accolon gave him such a stroke that he fell nigh to the earth; but Sir Arthur pressed unto Accolon with his shield, and gave him with a pommel in his hand such a buffet that he went three strides aback.

When the damsel of the lake beheld Arthur, how full of prowess his body was, and the treason that was wrought to have him slain, she had great pity that so good a knight and such a man of honour should be so destroyed. And at the next stroke, Sir Accolon dealt him such a blow that by the damsel's enchantment the sword Excalibur fell out of Accolon's hand to the earth. And therewithal Sir Arthur lightly leapt to it, and gat it in his hands, and immediately he knew that it was his sword Excalibur; and he said, "Thou hast been from me all too long, and much damage hast thou done me." And therewith he espied

the scabbard hanging by Accolon's side, and suddenly he sprang to him and pulled the scabbard from him, and threw it from him as far as he might throw it.

“O knight,” said Arthur, “this day hast thou done me great damage with this sword; now are you come unto your death.” And therewith Sir Arthur rushed on him with all his might and pulled him to the earth, and then pulled off his helm, and gave him such a buffet on his head that the blood came out of his ears, his nose, and his mouth. “Now will I slay thee,” said Arthur.

“Slay me you may well,” said Accolon, “if it please you, for you are the best knight that ever I found, and I see well that God is with you. But I promised to do this battle to the uttermost, and never be recreant while I lived, therefore shall I never yield myself with my mouth.”

Then Sir Arthur remembered him, and thought he should have seen this knight. “Now tell me,” said Arthur, “before I slay thee, of what country art thou, and of what court?”

“Sir knight,” said Sir Accolon, “I am of the court of King Arthur, and my name is Accolon of Gaul.”

Then was Arthur more dismayed than he was beforehand; for then he remembered the enchantment of the ship. “O sir knight,” said he, “I pray you tell me who gave you this sword.”

“Now, sir,” said Accolon, “I will tell you. It

was given to me yesterday by a dwarf ; and now that I have told you truth, I pray you tell me of whence thou art and of what court."

"O Accolon," said the king, "now I let thee wit that I am King Arthur to whom thou hast done great damage."

When Accolon heard that, he cried aloud, "Fair, sweet lord, have mercy on me, for I knew you not."

"O Sir Accolon," said King Arthur, "mercy shalt thou have, because I feel that thou knewest not my person."

Then Sir Arthur called the keepers of the field, and said, "Sirs, come hither, for here are we two knights who have fought with great damage unto us both, and like to have slain each other, if it had happened so ; and had either of us known the other, there would have been no battle, no stroke stricken."

Then Accolon cried aloud unto all the knights and men that were there gathered together, and said to them in this manner, "O lords, this noble knight that I have fought withal, which I sore repented, is a man of most prowess of all manhood and of worship in the world, for it is himself King Arthur, liege lord of us all ; and with mishap and with misadventure have I done this battle with the king and the lord that I love so well withal."

Then all the people fell down on their knees and cried King Arthur mercy. "Mercy shall ye

have," said Arthur. "And here may ye see what adventures befall errant knights ofttyme, how I have fought with a knight of mine own unto both my great damage and his. As to thee, Sir Damas, for whom I have been champion and won the field of this knight, yet will I judge, because you are called a proven knight and full of villainy, that you are not worthy of the honour of your deeds; therefore I will that you give unto your brother all the whole manor with the appurtenance, on this condition: that Sir Ontzlake hold the manor from you, and yearly give you a palfrey to ride upon; for that will become you better than to ride upon a courser. Also I charge thee, Sir Damas, upon pain of death that thou distress no more knights errant that ride on their adventure. And also that thou restore these twenty knights that thou hast long kept prisoners, all of their harness, that they be content; and if any of them come to my court and complain of thee, by my head, thou shalt die therefor. Also, Sir Ontzlake, as to you, because you are named a good knight and full of prowess and true and gentle in all your deeds, this shall be your charge,— I wish that in all goodly haste you come unto me and my court, and you shall be a knight of mine."

"God thank you for the largeness of your goodness and of your bounty," said Sir Ontzlake. "I shall be from henceforward at all time at your command; for, sir, as God ordained, I was hurt

lately by an adventurous knight through both my thighs, grieving me sore; else had I done this battle with you."

"God would," said Arthur, "it had been so, for then had I not been hurt as I am. I shall tell you the cause; I had not been hurt as I am, had it not been mine own sword that was stolen from me by treason; and this battle was ordained beforehand to have slain me, and so it was brought to the purpose by false enchantment."

"Alas," said Sir Ontzlake, "that is great pity that ever so noble a man as you are of your deeds and prowess, that any man or woman might desire to work any treason against you."

"I shall reward them," said Arthur, "in short time, by the grace of God. Now tell me," said Arthur, "how far am I from Camelot?"

"Sir, you are two days' journey therefrom."

"I would fain be at some place of worship," said Sir Arthur, "that I might rest me."

"Sir," said Sir Ontzlake, "hereby is a rich abbey, of your elder's foundation, of nuns but three miles hence."

So the king took leave of all the people, and mounted upon horseback, and Sir Accolon with him. And when they were come to the abbey, he had leeches brought to search his wounds and Accolon's; but Sir Accolon died within four days, for he had bled so much blood that he might not live, but King Arthur was well recovered.

BOOK II

BALIN AND BALAN

CHAPTER I

**WHICH TELLETH OF THE DAMSEL WITH A SWORD,
AND HOW NONE OF ARTHUR'S KNIGHTS MIGHT
DRAW IT**

AFTER the death of Uther Pendragon, Arthur, his son, reigned ; and he waged great war all his days to get all England into his hands ; for there were many kings within the realm of England, and in Wales, Scotland, and Cornwall. So it befell, on a time when King Arthur was at London, there came a knight and told the king that King Rience of North Wales had raised a great number of people, and entered into the land, and burnt and slain the king's true liege people.

“If this be true,” said Arthur, “it were great shame unto mine estate if he were not mightily withstood.”

“It is truth,” said the knight, “for I saw the host myself.”

“Well,” said the king, “make a cry that all the lords, knights and gentlemen of arms shall draw unto Camelot, for a council-general and a great joust.”

So when the king was come thither with all his baronage, there came a damsel who was sent on message from the great Lady Lile of Avilion. And when she came before King Arthur, she let fall her mantle that was most richly furred; and Arthur saw that she was girt with a noble sword, whereof the king had marvel, and said: "Damsel, for what cause are you girt with that sword? It becometh you not."

"Now shall I tell you," said the damsel. "This sword I am girt withal doth me great sorrow and cumberance, for I may not be delivered of this sword but by a knight. But he must be a passing good man, and without villainy or treachery and without treason. And if I may find such a knight, that hath all these virtues, he may draw this sword out of the sheath. I have been at King Rience's, for it was told me that there were passing good knights; and he and all his knights have essayed it, and none are able."

"This is a great marvel," said Arthur; "if this be sooth, I will myself essay to draw out the sword, not presuming that I am the best knight, but to give example to all the barons so that they shall essay, each one after the other, when I have essayed it."

Then Arthur took the sword by the sheath and by the girdle and pulled at it eagerly, but the sword would not come out.

“Sir,” said the damsel, “you need not pull half so hard, for he that shall pull it out shall do it with little might.”

“You say well,” said Arthur; “now essay ye, all my barons, but beware ye be not defiled with shame, treachery, nor guile.”

“Then it will not avail,” said the damsel, “for he must be a clean knight without villainy and of a gentle blood through both father and mother.”

Most of all the barons of the Round Table that were there at that time essayed, but none might draw out the sword; wherefore the damsel made great sorrow out of measure, and said, “Alas! I thought that in this court had been the best knights, without treachery or treason.”

“By my faith,” said Arthur, “here are good knights, as I deem, as any in the world; but their grace is not to help you, wherefore I am displeased.”

CHAPTER II

HOW BALIN DREW THE SWORD AND REFUSED TO RETURN IT TO THE DAMSEL

THEN it befell that there was a poor knight with King Arthur that had been prisoner with him half a year and more for slaying a knight who was cousin unto King Arthur. The name of this knight was Balin, and by intercession of

the barons he was delivered out of prison, for he was a strong knight. And so he went privily into the court, and saw this adventure. Now he would essay as other knights did, but because he was poor and poorly arrayed, he put himself not forward, but in his heart he was fully assured that he could as well as any knight that was there.

But as the damsel took her leave of Arthur and the barons, this knight Balin called unto her and said, "Damsel, I pray you of your courtesy, suffer me to essay as well as these lords; though I be so poorly clad, in my heart it seems that I am as well fitted as some of these others, and I think I shall do right well."

The damsel beheld the poor knight, and saw he was a likely man, but because of his poor array she thought he would be of no worship and not clean of villainy or treachery. So she said unto the knight, "Sir, do not put me to more pain or labour, for it seems that you will not succeed where others have failed."

"Ah! fair damsel," said Balin, "worthiness and good qualities and good deeds are not only in raiment, but manhood and honour are hid within man's person, and many a worshipful knight is not known unto all people, and therefore honour and hardiness are not in raiment."

"Verily," said the damsel, "you say sooth; therefore you shall essay to do what you may."

Then Balin took the sword by the handle and

the sheath, and drew it out easily ; and when he looked on the sword it pleased him much. Then had the king and all the barons great marvel that Balin had done that adventure, and many knights had great envy of Balin.

“ Certainly,” said the damsel, “ this is a passing good knight, and the best that ever I found, and many marvels shall he do. Now, gentle and courteous knight, give me the sword again.”

“ Nay,” said Balin, “ for this sword will I keep, unless it be taken from me by force.”

“ Well,” said the damsel, “ you are not wise to keep the sword from me, for you shall slay with the sword the best friend that you have and the man you most love in the world, and the sword shall be your destruction.”

“ I shall take the risk,” said Balin ; “ but the sword you shall not have at this time, by the faith of my body.”

“ You shall repent it within short time,” said the damsel ; “ for I wish the sword more for your sake than for mine. And I am passing heavy for your sake ; for you will not believe that sword shall be your destruction, and that is a great pity.” With that the damsel departed, making great sorrow.

CHAPTER III

OF BALIN'S DEPARTURE FROM THE COURT OF
ARTHUR

ANON after, Balin sent for his horse and armour, and so prepared to depart from the court and take his leave of King Arthur.

“Nay,” said the king, “you must not depart so lightly from this fellowship. I suppose you are displeased that I have showed you unkindness; blame me not harshly, for I was misinformed against you. If you will abide in this court among my fellowship, I shall so advance you that you shall be pleased.”

“God thank your highness,” said Balin, “for your bounty; but at this time I must needs depart, beseeching you always of your good grace.”

“Truly,” said the king, “I am right wroth for your departing. I pray you, fair knight, that you tarry not long, and you shall be right welcome to me and to my barons, and I shall amend all amiss that I have done against you.”

“God thank your lordship,” said Balin, and therewith made him ready to depart. Then the most part of the knights of the Round Table said that Balin had not achieved this adventure only by might, but by witchcraft.

CHAPTER IV

**HOW THE LADY OF THE LAKE ASKED A GIFT OF
ARTHUR, AND HOW BALIN SLEW HER WITH
THE SWORD**

Now while this knight was making him ready to depart, there came into the court a lady that was called the Lady of the Lake. And she came on horseback, richly clothed, and saluted King Arthur, and asked him the gift he had promised her when she gave him the sword.

“That is sooth,” said Arthur; “a gift I promised you; ask what you will, and you shall have it if it lie in my power to give it.”

“Well,” said the lady, “I ask the head of the knight that hath won the sword, or else the damsel’s head that brought it; I would rather have both their heads, for he slew my brother, a good knight and a true, and that gentlewoman is the cause of my father’s death.”

“Truly,” said King Arthur, “I may not grant either of their heads with honour, therefore ask what you will else, and I shall fulfil your desire.”

“I will ask none other thing,” said the lady.

When Balin was ready to depart, he saw the Lady of the Lake, whom he had sought three years; for by her means Balin’s mother had been slain. And when it was told him that she asked

his head of King Arthur, he went to her straight, and said, "Evil be you found: you would have my head, and therefore you shall lose yours"; and with his sword lightly he smote off her head before King Arthur.

"Alas, for shame!" said Arthur, "why have you done so? You have shamed me and all my court, for this was a lady that I was beholden to, and hither she came under my safe-conduct; I shall never forgive you that trespass."

"Sir," said Balin, "I regret your displeasure, but this same lady was the untruest lady living, and by enchantment and sorcery she hath been the destroyer of many good knights; and she was the cause that my mother was burnt, through her falsehood and treachery."

"What cause soever you had," said Arthur, "you should have forborne to injure her in my presence; therefore withdraw you out of my court in all haste."

Then Balin took up the head of the lady and bore it with him to his hostelry, and there he met with his squire, and so they rode forth out of the town. "Now," said Balin, "we must part. Take thou this head and bear it to my friends, and tell them what I have done, and tell my friends in Northumberland that my greatest foe is dead. Also tell them how I am out of prison, and what adventure befell me at the getting of this sword."

“Alas!” said the squire, “you are greatly to blame for displeasing King Arthur.”

“As for that,” said Balin, “I will hie me in all haste to meet with King Rience and destroy him, or to die therefor; and if it may hap me to win him, then will King Arthur be my good and gracious lord.”

Then King Arthur and the court made great dole and had shame of the death of the Lady of the Lake. Then the king buried her richly.

CHAPTER V

HOW MERLIN TOLD ARTHUR THE STORY OF THE SWORD

AT that time there was a knight, son of the King of Ireland; and his name was Lanceor, and he was a proud knight, and counted himself one of the best of the court. And he was very wrathful at Balin for the achieving of the sword, and that any should be accounted more hardy or of more prowess than he, so he asked King Arthur if he would give him leave to ride after Balin and revenge the wrong that he had done.

“Do your best,” said Arthur, “I am right wroth with Balin.” Then this Lanceor went to his hostelry and made him ready.

In the meanwhile came Merlin unto the court of King Arthur, and there was he told the adven-

ture of the sword, and the death of the Lady of the Lake.

“Now,” said Merlin, “this same damsel that brought the sword unto your court was the falsest damsel that liveth. She hath a brother, a passing good knight of prowess and a full true man; and this damsel loved another knight, and her brother met with that knight and slew him by force of his hands. When this false damsel understood this, she went to the Lady Lile of Avilion and besought this lady to help her to be avenged on her own brother. And so this Lady Lile of Avilion took this sword that she brought with her, and said there should no man pull it out of the sheath unless he were one of the best knights of this realm, and he should be hard and full of prowess, and with that sword he should slay her brother. This was the cause that the damsel came into this court; for she came never to do good, but always great harm. And that knight that hath achieved the sword shall be destroyed by that sword, which will prove great harm; for there liveth not a knight of more prowess than he. And he shall do unto you, my Lord Arthur, great honour and kindness, and it is a great pity he shall not endure but a while, for of his strength and hardiness I know not his match living.”

CHAPTER VI

HOW BALIN SLEW LANCEOR, AND HOW LANCEOR'S
LADY KILLED HERSELF THROUGH GRIEF

So the knight of Ireland armed himself at all points, and dressed his shield on his shoulder, and mounted upon horseback, and took his spear in his hand, and rode after a great pace, as much as his horse might go. And within a little space on a mountain he had a sight of Balin, and with a loud voice he cried, "Abide, knight, for you shall abide whether you will or nill, and the shield in front of you shall not help."

When Balin heard the noise he turned his horse fiercely, and said, "Fair knight, what will you with me; will you joust with me?"

"Yes," said the Irish knight; "therefore come I after you."

"Peradventure," said Balin, "it had been better to have remained at home, for many a man thinketh to put his enemy to rebuke, and oft it falleth to himself. From what court are you sent?"

"I am come from the court of King Arthur," said the knight of Ireland, "and come hither to revenge the despite you did this day to King Arthur and to his court."

"Well," said Balin, "I see I must have ado with you. Although I am sorry to grieve King

Arthur or any of his court, yet I am not ashamed ; for the lady that is dead did me great damage ; else would I have been loath as any knight that liveth to slay a lady."

" Make you ready," said Lanceor, " and dress you unto me, for one of us shall abide in the field."

Then they took their spears and came together as much as their horses might drive, and the Irish knight smote Balin on the shield so that his spear was shivered, and Balin hit him through the shield and coat of mail, and so pierced through his body and the horse's crupper. And anon he turned his horse fiercely, and drew out his sword, and wist not that he had slain him ; and then he saw him lie as a dead corpse.

Then he looked about him, and was aware of a damsels that came riding full fast as the horse might ride on a fair palfrey. And when she espied that Lanceor was slain, she was sorely grieved and said, " O Balin, two bodies thou hast slain, and one heart, and two hearts in one body, and two souls thou hast lost." And therewith she took the sword from her love that lay dead, and fell to the ground in a swoon. And when she arose, she wept full bitterly ; and her sorrow grieved Balin passingly sore, and he went unto her to take the sword out of her hand. But she held it so fast he might not take it from her unless he should have hurt her, and suddenly she

set the pommel to the ground, and rove herself through the body.

CHAPTER VII

HOW BALIN MET HIS BROTHER BALAN, AND OF HIS PLAN TO WIN ARTHUR'S REGARD

WHEN Balin espied her deeds, he was passing heavy in his heart, and ashamed that so fair a damsel had destroyed herself on account of his deed. "Alas!" said Balin, "I am very sorry for the death of this knight and this damsel, for there was much true love betwixt them both." And for sorrow he might no longer behold them, but turned his horse and looked toward a great forest, and there he saw his brother Balan, whom he knew by his arms. And when they were met, they put off their helms, and kissed together, and wept for joy and pity.

Then Balan said, "I little weened to have met with you at this sudden adventure; I am right glad of your deliverance out of your dolorous imprisonment, for a man told me in the castle of Four Stones that you were delivered, and that man had seen you in the court of King Arthur; and therefore I came hither into this country, for here I supposed to find you."

Anon the knight Balin told his brother of his adventure of the sword, and of the death of the

Lady of the Lake, and how King Arthur was displeased with him. "Wherefore," said Balin, "he sent this knight after me that lieth here dead; and the death of this damsel grieveth me sore."

"So doth it me," said Balan, "but you must take the adventure that God will ordain you."

"Truly," said Balin, "I am right heavy that my Lord Arthur is displeased with me, for he is the most worshipful knight that reigneth now on earth, and his love I will get or else I will put my life in peril. Now King Rience maketh a siege against the Castle Terrabil, and thither will we draw in all haste to prove our prowess upon him."

"I will well," said Balan, "that we do, and we will help each other as brethren ought to do."

CHAPTER VIII

HOW KING MARK ERECTED A TOMB FOR LANCEOR AND HIS LADY

THE meanwhile as they talked, there came a dwarf from the city Camelot on horseback, and found the dead bodies. Then he made great dole, and pulled out his hair for sorrow, and said. "Which of you knights has done this deed?"

"Whereby askest thou it?" said Balan.

"For I would wit it," said the dwarf.

“It was I,” said Balin, “that slew this knight in my defence; for hither he came to chase me, and either I must slay him or he me. And this damsel slew herself for his love, for which I am sorry, and for her sake I shall owe all women the better love.”

“Alas,” said the dwarf, “thou hast done great damage unto thyself, for this knight that is here dead is one of the most valiant men that lived; and trust well, Balin, the kin of this knight will chase you through the world till they have slain you.”

“As for that,” said Balin, “I fear not greatly, but I am right heavy that I have displeased my lord King Arthur for the death of this knight.”

So, as they talked together, there came a king of Cornwall riding, and he was called King Mark. And when he saw these two bodies dead, and understood how they were dead from the two knights, then made the king great sorrow for the true love that was betwixt them, and said, “I will not depart till I have on this earth made a tomb.”

And there he put up his pavilions and sought through all the country to find a tomb, and in a church they found one fair and rich, and the king then put the knight and the lady both in the earth, and put the tomb upon them, and wrote the names of both on the tomb, and the words:—

“Here lieth Lanceor, son of the King of Ireland, that at his own request was slain by the hands of

Balin ; and his lady, Colombe, who slew herself with her love's sword for dole and sorrow."

CHAPTER IX

HOW MERLIN MADE CERTAIN PROPHECIES

MEANWHILE as this was a-doing, in came Merlin.

Then said Merlin to Balin, "Thou hast done thyself great hurt because thou sawest not this lady that slew herself, for thou mightest have saved her if thou wouldest."

"By the faith of my body," said Balin, "I might not save her, for she slew herself suddenly."

"I am sorry," said Merlin, "because of the death of that lady thou shalt strike a stroke the most dolorous that ever man struck, except the stroke of our Lord, for thou shalt hurt the truest knight and the man of most honour that now liveth, and through that stroke three kingdoms shall be in great poverty, misery, and wretchedness twelve years, and the knight shall not be whole of that wound for many years."

And Balin said, "If I wist it were true what you say, I would slay myself to make thee a liar."

Therewith Merlin vanished away suddenly. And then Balan and his brother took their leave of King Mark.

“First,” said the king to Balin, “tell me your name.”

“Sir,” said Balan, “you may see he beareth two swords; thereby you may call him the Knight with the Two Swords.”

CHAPTER X

HOW BALIN AND BALAN OVERCAME KING RIENCE, AND THEN TOOK HIM TO ARTHUR'S COURT

AND so departed King Mark unto Camelot to King Arthur, and Balin and Balan took the way toward King Rience. And as they rode together, they met with Merlin disguised, but they knew him not.

“Whither ride you?” said Merlin.

“It matters not,” said the two knights; “but what is thy name?”

“At this time,” said Merlin, “I will not tell it thee.”

“It is well seen,” said the knights, “that thou art not a true man, that thou wilt not tell thy name.”

“As for that,” said Merlin, “be it as it may; I can tell wherefore ye ride this way,—ye go to meet King Rience; but it will not avail without ye have my counsel.”

“Ah,” said Balin, “you are Merlin; we will be ruled by your counsel.”

“Come on,” said Merlin, “ye shall have great honour, and look that ye do knightly, for ye shall have great need.”

“As for that,” said Balin, “dread you not; we will do what we may.”

Then Merlin lodged them in a wood, among leaves beside the highway, and took off the bridles of their horses and put them to grass, and laid the knights down to rest till it was nigh midnight. Then he bade them rise and make them ready, for the king was nigh them.

“Which is the king?” said Balin.

“Abide,” said Merlin; “here straightway you shall meet with him.” And therewith he showed Balin and his brother where the king rode.

Anon Balin and his brother met with the king, and smote him down, and wounded him fiercely; and there they slew on the right hand and the left hand, and slew more than forty of his men. And the remnant fled. Then went they again to King Rience, and would have slain him had he not yielded him unto their grace.

Then said he thus: “Knights full of prowess, slay me not, for by my life ye may win, and by my death ye shall win nothing.”

Then said these two knights, “You say sooth”; and so laid him on a horse-litter.

With that, Merlin vanished, and went to King Arthur, and told him how his greatest enemy was taken and discomfited.

“By whom?” said King Arthur.

“By two knights,” said Merlin, “that would please your lordship, and to-morrow you shall know what knights they are.”

Anon afterward, came the Knight with the Two Swords, and Balan his brother, and they brought with them King Rience of North Wales, and there delivered him to the porters, and charged them with him; and so they two returned again in the dawning of the day.

King Arthur came then to King Rience, and said, “Sir king, you are welcome: by what adventure come you hither?”

“Sir,” said King Rience, “I came hither by a hard adventure.”

“Who won you?” said King Arthur.

“Sir,” said the king, “the Knight with the Two Swords and his brother, which are two marvellous knights of prowess.”

“I know them not,” said Arthur; “but much I am beholden to them.”

“Ah,” said Merlin, “I shall tell you: it is Balin that achieved the sword, and his brother Balan, a good knight—there liveth not better knights of prowess and of worthiness, but they shall not long endure.”

“Alas,” said King Arthur, “that is great pity, for I am much beholden unto them, and I have ill deserved this kindness.”

“Nay,” said Merlin, “the Knight with the

Two Swords shall do much more for you, and that you shall know in haste. But, sir, are you prepared? for to-morrow morning Nero, King Rience's brother, will set on you before noon with a great host; and therefore make you ready, for I will depart from you."

CHAPTER XI

OF THE BATTLE BETWEEN KING ARTHUR AND NERO, AND HOW NERO WAS SLAIN

THEN King Arthur made ready his host in ten battalions, and Nero was ready in the field before the Castle Terrabil with a great host, and he had many more people than Arthur had. Then Nero had the vanguard with the most part of his people, and Merlin came to King Lot of the Isle of Orkney, and held him with a tale of prophecy, till Nero and his people were destroyed. And there Sir Kay, the seneschal, did passingly well, so that during the days of his life the honour went never from him; and Sir Hervis de Revel did marvellous deeds with King Arthur, and King Arthur slew that day twenty knights, and maimed forty.

At that time, came in the Knight with the Two Swords and his brother Balan, but they two did so marvellously that the king and all the knights marvelled at them. And all they that beheld them said they were sent from heaven as angels, or

devils from hell ; and King Arthur said himself that they were the best knights that ever he saw, for they gave such strokes that all men had wonder of them.

In the meanwhile came one to King Lot, and told him that while he tarried there, Nero was destroyed and slain with all his people.

“ Alas,” said King Lot, “ I am ashamed, for by my default there is many a worshipful man slain ; for if we had been together, there would have been no host under the heaven that could have matched with us. This rogue with his prophecy hath mocked me.”

CHAPTER XII

HOW KING LOT OF ORKNEY FOUGHT KING ARTHUR, AND HOW PELLINORE KILLED KING LOT

ALL that did Merlin, for he knew well that if King Lot had been there at the first battle, King Arthur would have been slain and all his people destroyed. Well Merlin knew that one of the kings should be dead that day, and loath was he that both should be slain ; but of the twain he would rather have King Lot slain than King Arthur.

“ Now what is best to do ? ” said King Lot of Orkney. “ Whether it is better for me to treat with King Arthur or to fight ; for the greater part of our people are slain and destroyed.”

“Sir,” said a knight, “set on Arthur; for they are weary and worn out with fighting, and we are fresh.”

“As for me,” said King Lot, “I would every knight would do his part as I would do mine.”

And then they advanced banners and smote together and broke their spears; and Arthur’s knights, with the help of the Knight with the Two Swords and his brother Balan, put King Lot and his host to the worse. But always King Lot was in the foremost front, and did marvellous deeds of arms, for all his host were borne up by his hands. But alas, he might not endure! And it was great pity that so worthy a knight should be overmatched, that of late had been a knight of King Arthur’s, and wedded the sister of King Arthur.

So there was a knight called Pellinore, who was a good man of prowess, and he smote a mighty stroke at King Lot as he fought with all his enemies, but he failed of his stroke, and smote the horse’s neck so that it fell to the ground with King Lot. And therewith anon Pellinore smote him a great stroke through the helm and head unto the brows. And then all the host of Orkney fled, and there were slain many mothers’ sons.

But King Pellinore bore the blame of the death of King Lot; wherefore Sir Gawaine revenged the death of his father the tenth year after he

was made knight, and slew King Pellinore with his own hands.

Also, there were slain at that battle twelve kings on the side of King Lot with Nero, and all were buried in the Church of Saint Stephen's in Camelot, and the remnant of knights and of others were buried in a great rock.

CHAPTER XIII

HOW ARTHUR HONOURED THE SLAIN KINGS, AND HOW MERLIN REVEALED CERTAIN MARVEL- LOUS THINGS

So to the interment came King Lot's wife, Mar-gawse, with her four sons, Gawaine, Agravaine, Gaheris, and Gareth. Also, there came thither King Uriens, Sir Ewaine's father, and Morgan le Fay, his wife, that was King Arthur's sister. All these came to the interment. But of all the twelve kings, King Arthur made the tomb of King Lot most richly. And then Merlin had made twelve images of brass and copper, covered with gold, in the sign of twelve kings, and each one of them held a taper of wax that burnt day and night; and a figure of King Arthur was made standing above them with a sword drawn in his hand, and all the twelve figures had countenance like unto men overcome.

All this made Merlin by his subtle craft, and

there he told the king, "When I am dead, these tapers shall burn no longer, and soon afterward, the adventures of the Sangreal shall come among you and be achieved." Also he told Arthur how Balin, the worshipful knight, should give the dolorous stroke whereof should fall great vengeance.

"Oh, where are Balin and Balan and Pellinore?" said King Arthur.

"As for Pellinore," said Merlin, "he will meet with you soon; and as for Balin, he will not be long from you; but the other brother will depart, and you shall see him no more."

"By my faith," said Arthur, "they are two marvellous knights, and Balin hath more prowess than any knight that ever I found, and much beholden am I unto him. Would God he would abide with me."

"Sir," said Merlin, "see that you keep well the scabbard of Excalibur, for you shall lose no blood while you have the scabbard upon you, no matter how many wounds you have."

So afterward, for safekeeping, Arthur betook the scabbard to Morgan le Fay, his sister. And she loved another knight better than her husband, King Uriens, or King Arthur, so she would have had Arthur, her brother, slain. And therefore she had another scabbard like it made by enchantment, and gave the scabbard of Excalibur to the knight. The knight's name was called Accolon, and afterward he nearly slew King Arthur.

After this, Merlin told King Arthur of the prophecy that there should be a great battle beside Salisbury, and Mordred, his own son, should be against him. Also he told him that Bagdemagus was his cousin and akin unto King Uriens.

CHAPTER XIV

HOW SIR HERLEWS LE BERBEUS WAS KILLED BY GARLON

WITHIN a day or two King Arthur was somewhat sick, and he pitched his pavilion in a meadow, and there he laid him down on a pallet to sleep, but he might have no rest. Anon he heard a great noise of a horse, and therewith the king looked out at the porch of the pavilion, and saw a knight coming and making great sorrow.

“Abide, fair sir,” said Arthur, “and tell me wherefore thou makest this sorrow.”

“You may little help me,” said the knight; and so passed forth to the castle of Meliot.

Anon afterward, there came Balin, and when he saw King Arthur, he alighted off his horse, and came to the king on foot, and saluted him.

“By my head,” said Arthur, “you are welcome. Sir, right now came riding this way a knight making great mourn, for what cause I cannot tell; wherefore I would desire you of your courtesy and of your gentleness to fetch

that knight either by force or else by his good will."

"I will do more for your lordship than that," said Balin.

And so he rode and found the knight with a damsels in a forest, and said, "Sir knight, you must come with me unto King Arthur to tell him of your sorrow."

"That will I not," said the knight, "for it will harm me greatly and do you no good."

"Sir," said Balin, "I pray you make you ready, for you must go with me, or else I must fight with you and bring you by force, and that I am loath to do."

"Will you be my warrant," said the knight, "if I go with you?"

"Yea," said Balin, "or else I will die therefore."

And so he made him ready to go with Balin, and left the damsels waiting. And as they were even before King Arthur's pavilion, there came one invisible, and smote this knight that went with Balin throughout the body with a spear.

"Alas," said the knight, "I am slain under your conduct by a knight called Garlon; therefore take my horse that is better than yours, and ride to the damsels and follow the quest that I was in as she will lead you, and revenge my death when you may."

"That shall I do," said Balin, "and that I make

a vow unto knighthood ; ” and so he departed from this knight with great sorrow.

So King Arthur buried this knight richly, and made a mention on his tomb, how there was slain Herlews le Berbeus, and by whom the treachery was done, — the knight Garlon. But ever the damsel bare the truncheon of the spear with her that Sir Herlews was slain withal.

CHAPTER XV

HOW THE MAID YIELDED THE CUSTOM OF THE CASTLE

So Balin and the damsel rode into a forest, and there met with a knight that had been a-hunting. And that knight asked Balin for what cause he made so great sorrow.

“ I do not desire to tell you,” said Balin.

“ Now,” said the knight, “ if I were armed as you are, I would fight with you.”

“ There is no need for that,” said Balin, “ I am not afraid to tell you.” And so he told him how it was.

“ Ah,” said the knight, “ is this all ? Here I promise you by the faith of my body never to depart from you while my life lasteth.”

And so he went to the hostelry and armed him, and so rode forth with Balin. And as they came by an hermitage even by a churchyard, there

came the knight Garlon invisible and smote this knight, Perin de Mountbeliard, through the body with a spear.

“Alas,” said the knight, “I am slain by this traitor knight that rideth invisible.”

“Alas,” said Balin, “it is not the first despite he hath done me ;” and there the hermit and Balin buried the knight under a rich stone and a tomb royal.

Anon after this, Balin and the damsel rode till they came to a castle, and there Balin alighted, and he and the damsel went to go into the castle. And anon as Balin came within the castle, the portcullis fell down at his back, and there came many men about the damsel, and would have slain her.

When Balin saw that, he was sore aggrieved, for he could not help the damsel. And then he went up into the tower, and leapt over the walls into the ditch, and hurt him not ; and anon he pulled out his sword and would have fought with them. And they all said nay, they would not fight with him, for they did nothing but the old custom of the castle. Then they told him how their lady was sick, and had lain many years, and she might not be whole until she had a silver dish full of blood of a clean maid and a king’s daughter; and therefore the custom of this castle is, there shall no damsel pass this way but she shall yield a silver dish full of her blood.

“Well,” said Balin, “she shall bleed as much as she may bleed, but I will not lose the life of her while my life lasteth.”

And so Balin made her to bleed by her permission, but her blood helped not the lady. And so he and she rested there all night, and on the morn they passed on their ways.

CHAPTER XVI

HOW BALIN KILLED THE KNIGHT WHO RODE INVISIBLE

AND they rode three or four days, and never met with adventure. Then by chance they were lodged with a gentleman that was a rich man and well at ease. And as they sat at their supper, Balin overheard one complain grievously by him in a chair.

“What is this noise?” said Balin.

“Forsooth,” said his host, “I will tell you. I was but lately at a jousting, and there I jested with a knight that is brother unto King Pelles, and twice I smote him down, and then he promised to revenge himself on my best friend, and so he wounded my son that cannot be whole till I have of that knight’s blood, and he rideth always invisible, but I know not his name.”

“Ah,” said Balin, “I know that knight; his name is Garlon: he hath slain two knights of

mine in the same manner; therefore I would rather meet with that knight than all the gold in this realm, for the despite he hath done me."

"Well," said his host, "I shall tell you that King Pelles of Listeneise hath made a cry in all his country of a great feast that shall take place within these twenty days; and no knight may there come unless he bring a lady with him; and that knight, your enemy and mine, you shall see that day."

"Then I promise you," said Balin, "part of his blood to heal your son withal."

"We will go forward to-morrow morning," said his host.

So on the morn they rode all three toward Pelles, and they had fifteen days' journey before they came thither; and that same day began the great feast. And so they alighted and stabled their horses, and went into the castle, but Balin's host might not be let in because he had no lady. Then Balin was well received and brought unto a chamber, and there they brought him robes and would have had him leave his sword behind him.

"Nay," said Balin, "that do I not, for it is the custom of my country for a knight always to keep his weapon with him, and that custom will I keep, or else I will depart as I came."

Then they gave him leave to wear his sword, and so he went unto the castle, and was set among knights of honour, and his lady beside him. Soon

Balin asked a knight, "Is there not a knight in this court whose name is Garlon?"

"Yonder he goeth," said the knight, "he with the black face; he is the most wonderful knight that is now living, for he destroyeth many good knights, for he goeth invisible."

"Ah well," said Balin, "is that he?" Then Balin counselled with himself a long time: "If I slay him here, I shall not escape, and if I leave him now, peradventure I shall never meet with him again to such advantage, and much harm he will do if he live."

Therewith Garlon saw that this Balin beheld him, and then he came and smote Balin on the face with the back of his hand, and said, "Knight, why beholdest thou me so? For shame therefor, eat thy meat, and do that thou camest for."

"Thou sayest truly," said Balin; "this is not the first despite that thou hast done me, and therefore I will do what I came for." And he rose up fiercely, and clave his head to the shoulders. "Give me the truncheon," said Balin to his lady, "wherewith he slew your knight." Anon she gave it to him, for always she bare the truncheon with her. And therewith Balin smote him through the body, and said openly, "With that truncheon thou hast slain a good knight, and now it sticketh in thy body." And then Balin called unto him his host, saying, "Now may you fetch blood enough to heal your son withal."

CHAPTER XVII

HOW BALIN FOUGHT KING PELLES, AND HOW
THE CASTLE FELL

ANON all the knights arose from the table to set upon Balin, and King Pelles himself arose up fiercely, and said, "Knight, hast thou slain my brother? Thou shalt die therefor before thou depart."

"Well," said Balin, "joust with me yourself."

"Yes," said King Pelles, "there shall no man have ado with thee but myself, for the love of my brother."

Then King Pelles caught in his hand a grim weapon and smote eagerly at Balin; but Balin put his sword betwixt his head and the stroke, and therewith his sword burst in sunder. And when Balin was weaponless, he ran into a chamber to seek some weapon, and so from chamber to chamber, but no weapon could he find, and always King Pelles ran after him. At the last he entered into a chamber that was marvellously well furnished, and there was a bed arranged with cloth of gold, the richest that might be thought, and thereby stood a table of solid gold with four pillars of silver that bare up the table, and upon the table stood a marvellous spear strangely wrought.

And when Balin saw that spear, he gat it in his hand and turned to King Pelles, and smote

him passingly sore, so that King Pelles fell down in a swoon. And therewith the castle roof and walls broke and fell to the earth, and Balin fell down so that he might not stir foot nor hand. And so the most part of the castle, that was fallen down through that dolorous stroke, lay upon Pelles and Balin three days.

Then Merlin came thither, and took up Balin, and gat him a good horse, for his was dead, and bade him ride out of that country.

“I would have my damsels,” said Balin.

“Lo,” said Merlin, “she lieth dead.”

And King Pelles lay many years sore wounded, and might never be whole till Galahad, the high prince, healed him in the quest of the Sangreal; for in that place was part of the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ that Joseph of Arimathea brought into this land. And with that same spear Longius smote our Lord to the heart; and King Pelles was nigh of Joseph’s kin, and was the most honourable man that lived in those days, and great pity was it that he was hurt, for by that stroke there was brought great dole, grief, and sorrow.

CHAPTER XVIII

HOW BALIN WAS REQUIRED TO FIGHT, AND HOW HIS SHIELD WAS TAKEN FROM HIM

THEN departed Balin from Merlin, and said, “In this world we shall meet no more.” So he

rode forth through the fair countries and cities, and found the people dead, slain on every side. And all that were alive cried, "O Balin, thou hast caused great damage in these countries; for the dolorous strike thou gavest unto King Pelles three countries are destroyed, and doubt not but the vengeance will fall on thee at the last."

When Balin was past those countries he was passing glad. So he rode eight days before he met with adventure, and then he came by a cross, and thereon were letters of gold written, that said:

"It is not for any knight to ride toward this castle."

Then saw he an old gray gentleman coming toward him, that said, "Balin le Savage, thou passest thy bounds to come this way, therefore go back, and it will be well for thee."

And he vanished away anon; and so Balin heard a horn blow as if for the death of a beast. "That blast," said Balin, "is blown for me, for I am the prize, and yet am I not dead."

Anon withal he saw an hundred ladies and many knights, that welcomed him with fair semblance, and led him into the castle, and there was dancing and minstrelsy and all manner of joy.

Then the chief lady of the castle said, "Knight with the Two Swords, you must have ado and joust

with a knight hereby that keepeth an island, for there may no man pass this way unless he joust before he pass."

"That is an unhappy custom," said Balin.

"You shall have ado but with one knight," said the lady.

"Well," said Balin, "since I must, I am ready; but travelling men are oft weary and their horses too; but though my horse be weary, my heart is not weary."

"Sir," said a knight to Balin, "your shield does not look good; I will lend you a bigger one."

And so he took the shield that was unknown, and left his own, and put him and his horse in a great boat, and so went unto the island. And when he came to it, he met with a damsel, and she said, "O knight Balin, why have you left your own shield? Alas, you have put yourself in great danger, for by your shield you would have been known."

"I am sorry," said Balin, "that ever I came within this country, but I may not turn back now for shame, and what adventure shall fall to me I will take it."

And then he looked on his armour, and understood he was well armed, and therewith blessed him and mounted upon his horse.

CHAPTER XIX

HOW BALIN AND BALAN WOUNDED EACH OTHER
TO DEATH

THEN before him he saw come riding out of a castle a knight, and his horse was trapped all in red, and he himself was arrayed in the same colour. When this knight in red beheld Balin, he thought it should be his brother Balin, because of his two swords, but because he knew not his shield he deemed it was not he. And so they dressed their spears and came marvellously fast together, and they smote each other in the shields, but their spears and their course were so big that horse and man were overthrown and they lay both in a swoon. But Balin was bruised sore by the fall of his horse, for he was weary of travel. And Balan was the first that rose on foot and drew his sword and went toward Balin. And Balin arose and went against Balan; but Balan smote Balin first, and smote him through the shield and crushed his helmet. Then Balin smote him again with that unhappy sword, and well nigh had felled his brother Balan, and so they fought there together till their breaths failed.

Then Balin looked up to the castle, and saw the towers stand full of ladies. So they went unto battle again, and wounded each other dolefully, and then they breathed fast, and all the place

there as they fought was blood red. And at that time each had smitten the other seven great wounds, the least of which might have been the death of the mightiest giant in this world. Then they went to battle again so marvellously that it was fearful to see the great blood-shedding.

At last Balan, the younger brother, withdrew him a little and laid him down. Then said Balin le Savage, "What knight art thou? for before now I never found a knight that matched me."

"My name is Balan," said he, "brother unto the good knight Balin."

"Alas," said Balin, "that ever I should see this day;" and therewith he fell backward in a swoon.

Then Balan went on all four feet and hands, and put off the helm of his brother, but he could not know him by his face, it was so cut and covered with blood. But when Balin awoke he said, "O Balan my brother, thou hast slain me and I thee; wherefore all the wide world shall speak of us both."

"Alas," said Balan, "that ever I saw this day, that by mishap I did not know you; for I saw your two swords, but because you had another shield I deemed you had been another knight."

"Alas," said Balin, "that was the fault of an unhappy knight in the castle, for he caused me to leave my own shield to the destruction of us both, and if I might live I would destroy that castle for the despite it has done us."

“That were well done,” said Balan, “for I could not depart from here since I came hither; for here I happened to slay a knight that kept this island and since then might I never depart; and no more should you, brother, even if you had slain me, as you have, and escaped with your life.”

CHAPTER XX

HOW THE LADY HAD BALIN AND BALAN BURIED IN ONE TOMB

THEN came the lady of the tower with four knights and six ladies and six yeomen unto them, and so Balan prayed the lady of her gentleness, for his true service, that she would bury them both in that same place where the battle was done. And she told them with weeping that it should be done richly in the best manner.

“Now,” said Balin, “will you send for a priest that we may receive our last sacrament?”

“Yea,” said the lady, “it shall be done;” and so she sent for a priest and he gave them their rites.

“Now,” said Balin, “when we are buried in one tomb, and the mention made over us how two brethren slew each other, there will never good knight nor good man see our tomb but they will pray for our souls.” And so all the ladies and gentlewomen wept for pity.

Then anon Balan died, but Balin died not till the midnight after, and so were they buried both, and the lady caused to be made a mention of Balan how he was there slain by his brother's hands, but she knew not Balin's name.

CHAPTER XXI

HOW MERLIN TOOK THE SWORD AND SHIELD AND LEFT THEM FOR GALAHAD

In the morning came Merlin and wrote Balin's name on the tomb with letters of gold:—

“Here lieth Balin le Savage that was the knight with the two swords, and he hath smote the dolorous stroke.”

Also Merlin made there a bed that never man should lie in but he went out of his wit, yet Launcelot du Lake destroyed that bed through his nobility. And anon after Balin was dead, Merlin took his sword, and took off the pommel and set on another pommel. So Merlin bade a knight that stood before him to handle that sword, and he essayed, and he might not handle it. Then Merlin laughed.

“Why laugh you?” said the knight.

“This is the cause,” said Merlin: “there shall never man handle this sword but the best knight of the world, and that shall be Sir Launcelot or else Galahad his son. And Launcelot with this

sword shall slay the man that in the world he loved best, that shall be Sir Gawaine." All this he wrote in the pommel of the sword.

And that same day Galahad, the high prince, came to King Arthur, and so Galahad brought with him the scabbard, and achieved the sword that was there in the marble stone floating upon the water. And on Whitsunday he achieved the sword as it is rehearsed in the book of Sangreal. Soon after this was done Merlin came to King Arthur and told him of the dolorous stroke that Balin gave to King Pelles, and how Balin and Balan fought together the most marvellous battle that ever was heard of, and how they were buried both in one tomb.

"Alas!" said King Arthur, "this is the greatest pity that ever I heard tell of two knights, for in the world I know not two such knights."

Thus endeth the tale of Balin and Balan, two brethren born in Northumberland, good knights.

BOOK III

THE WONDERFUL TALE OF GALAHAD AND THE QUEST OF THE SANGREAL¹

CHAPTER I

HOW GALAHAD WAS MADE KNIGHT

AT the vigil of Pentecost when all the fellowship of the Round Table were come again unto Camelot, and the tables were set ready to the meat, there entered into the hall a fair gentlewoman on horseback. She had ridden fast, for her horse was all besweated. There she alighted, and came before the king and saluted him. Then she straightway went unto Launcelot and said, "Sir Launcelot, I salute you, and require you to come with me into a forest near by."

And though Sir Launcelot wist not why he should go with that lady, he bade his squire saddle his horse and bring his arms, and then departed he with the lady. And they rode until they came into a forest where they saw an abbey of nuns. And they entered, and a fair company

¹ *Sangreal*, or Holy Grail, that is, "holy cup," the cup from which Jesus Christ is supposed to have drunk at the last supper and in which Joseph of Arimathea is said to have caught the blood that fell from Jesus' side when he was on the cross.

of nuns came and led Sir Launcelot into the Abbess's chamber and unarmed him.

And presently therein came twelve nuns that brought with them Galahad, a youth so fair and so well-made, that in all the world men might scarcely find his match ; and all those ladies wept. "Sir," said they all, "we bring you here this child whom we have nourished, and we pray you to make him a knight; for of a more worthy man's hand may he not receive the order of knighthood."

And Sir Launcelot beheld the young squire, and saw him seemly and pure as a dove, and he thought he had never seen so fair a man.

Then said Sir Launcelot, "Cometh this desire of himself?"

He and all they said, "Yea."

"Then shall he," said Sir Launcelot, "receive the high order of knighthood to-morrow at the celebration of the high feast." And on the morrow at dawn he made him knight, and said, "God make you a good man, for beauty faileth you not."

CHAPTER II

HOW GALAHAD CAME TO THE SIEGE PERILOUS, AND HOW HE WON A SWORD

"Now, fair sir," said Sir Launcelot, "will ye come with me unto the court of King Arthur?"

“Nay,” answered Galahad, “I will not go with you at this time.”

Then Launcelot departed from the abbey, and so he came unto Camelot in the forenoon on Whit-sunday. And when the king and all the knights were come unto the Round Table, the barons espied in the sieges all about, written with golden letters, the names of those knights to whom the sieges appertained. And thus they went until they came to the Siege Perilous, where they found letters which said:—

“Four hundred and fifty-four winters after our Lord Jesus Christ ought this siege to be fulfilled.”

Then all they said, “This is a marvellous thing.”

And Sir Launcelot said, “It seemeth to me this siege ought to be fulfilled this same day; for this is the feast of Pentecost after the four hundred and fifty-fourth year; and if it would please all parties, I would rather that none of these letters were seen this day, till he is come that ought to achieve this adventure.”

Then ordained they that a cloth of silk be brought to cover these letters in the Siege Perilous.

Then the king bade them hasten unto dinner, but at that time in came a squire, and said unto the king, “Sir, I bring you marvellous tidings. There is beneath here at the river, a

great stone floating above the water and therein I saw sticking a sword."

The king said, "I will see that marvel."

So all the knights went with him to the river, and there they found a stone floating, and therein stuck a fair sword; and in the pommel thereof were precious stones skilfully set in letters of gold. Then the barons read the letters, which said:—

"Never shall man take me hence except him by whose side I ought to hang, and he shall be the best knight in the world."

When the king had seen the letters, he said unto Sir Launcelot: "Fair sir, this sword ought to be yours, for I am sure you are the best knight in the world."

Then Sir Launcelot answered very soberly: "Truly, sir, it is not my sword; also, sir, wit ye well I have not the hardihood to set my hand to it, for it belongs not at my side. Also, he who essayeth to take the sword and faileth, shall receive such a wound by that sword that he shall not be whole long afterward. And I tell you that this same day shall the adventures of the Sangreal begin."

Then King Arthur bade Sir Gawaine essay to take the sword; and though Sir Gawaine was loath to do so, yet because King Arthur commanded him, he took the sword by the handles;

but he could not move it. Then there were no more that durst be so hardy as to set their hands thereto. So then Sir Kay, the steward, bade King Arthur and all the knights go in to dinner ; and every knight knew his own place, and set him therein.

And when all the sieges were fulfilled, save only the Siege Perilous, anon there befell a marvellous adventure : all the doors and windows of the palace shut by themselves, yet the hall was not greatly darkened ; and thereupon they were all astonished. Then an old man came in, clothed all in white, and there was no knight knew whence he came. And with him he brought a young knight, in red arms, without sword or shield, save a scabbard hanging by his side. And these words the old man said unto Arthur : “ Peace be with you, sir. I bring here a young knight, who is of kings’ lineage, and of the kindred of Joseph of Arimathaea, whereby the marvels of this court and of strange realms shall be fully accomplished.”

Then the old man made the young man unarm himself. And anon he led him to the Siege Perilous, beside which sat Sir Launcelot. And the good man lifted up the cloth, and found there letters which said thus : —

“ **This is the siege of Galahad, the high prince.**”

“ Sir,” said the old knight, “ wot you well, that place is yours.”

Then Galahad sat down in that place, and he said to the old man, "Sir, you may go your way, for you have done all that which you were commanded to do."

So the good man departed.

Then all the knights of the Round Table marvelled greatly that Sir Galahad dare sit there in that Siege Perilous, when he was so tender of age, and they said, "This is he by whom the Sangreal shall be achieved; for never before sat one in that siege but that harm came to him."

Then came King Arthur unto Galahad, and said, "Sir, you are welcome; for you shall move many good knights unto the quest of the Sangreal." Then the king took him by the hand, and went down from the palace to show him the adventures of the stone.

"Sir," said the king unto Galahad, "here is a great marvel as ever I saw; for right good knights have essayed and failed."

"Sir," said Galahad, "that is no marvel, for this adventure is not theirs but mine. For the surety that I should achieve this sword, I brought none with me; for here by my side hangeth the scabbard." And anon he laid his hand upon the sword, and lightly drew it out of the stone, and put it in the sheath.

"Sir," said the king, "a shield God shall send you."

“Now,” said Galahad, “have I that sword¹ that sometime was Balin’s, and he was a passing good man of his hands; and with this sword he slew his brother Balan, and that was great pity, for he was a good knight, and either slew other. And with this sword Balin smote my grandfather, King Pelles, a dolorous stroke of which he is not yet whole, nor shall be till I heal him.”

Then the king espied a lady riding on a white palfrey toward them. And she saluted the king and queen and said, “Sir king, Nacien, the hermit, sendeth thee word that to thee shall befall the greatest worship that ever befell king in Britain; and I say you wherefore, for this day the Sangreal shall appear in thy house and feed thee and all thy fellowship of the Round Table.”

So she departed and went the same way that she came.

“Now,” said the king, “I am sure shall all ye of the Round Table depart on this quest of the Sangreal and never shall I see you again whole together; therefore I will see you all together in the meadow of Camelot to joust, that after your death men may tell how such good knights were wholly together such a day.”

So at the king’s request they accorded all, and took on their harness and went to the jousting. And the queen was in a tower with all her ladies to behold that tournament.

¹ See “Balin and Balan,” chap. xxi, p. 82.

Now all this moving of the king was for this intent, that he might see Galahad proved ; for the king deemed he should not lightly come again unto the court after his departing. So Galahad put upon him his helm, but shield would he take none for no prayer of the king. Then Galahad dressed him in the midst of the meadow, and began to break spears marvellously, so that all men wondered ; for he there surmounted all other knights, and within a while he had defouled many good knights of the Round Table save twain, that were Sir Launcelot and Sir Percivale.

CHAPTER III

HOW THE KNIGHTS WERE REPLENISHED WITH THE HOLY GRAIL, AND HOW THEY AVOWED THE QUEST

AND then the king and all his estates went home unto Camelot, and so went to evensong in the great minster, and so after that to supper. Then anon they heard such cracking and crying of thunder that they thought the place would fal apart. In the midst of this blast entered a sunbeam, clearer by seven times than ever they saw day, and the grace of the Holy Ghost shone upon them all. And all those knights appeared fairer than ever they had before. And for a great while no knight could speak a word, and they looked

at each other as though they were dumb. Then there entered into the hall the Holy Grail covered with white samite, but none could see it nor who bore it. And then was all the hall filled with good odours, and every knight had such meats and drinks as he best loved in this world. And when the Holy Grail had been borne through the hall, it departed so suddenly that they wist not what became of it. Then had they all breath to speak, and the king yielded thanks to God for His good grace that He had sent them.

“Now,” said Sir Gawaine, “we have been served this day with what meats and drinks we liked best, but one thing disappointed us, we could not see the Holy Grail, it was so carefully covered. Wherefore I will make here my vow that to-morrow I shall begin the quest of the Sangreal ; that I shall seek a twelvemonth and a day, or more if need be, and never shall I return again unto the court till I have seen it more openly than it hath been seen here ; and if I may not succeed, I shall return again knowing that it is not the will of our Lord that I see it.”

When those of the Round Table heard Sir Gawaine say this, they arose for the most part, and made such vows as he had made.

Anon as King Arthur heard this, he became very sad, for he wist well that they might not gainsay their vows.

“Alas,” said King Arthur to Sir Gawaine, “ye

have bereft me of the fairest fellowship and the truest of knighthood that were ever seen together in any realm of the world; for when they depart hence, I am sure they shall never all meet more in this world, for many shall die in the quest. I have loved them as well as my life, wherefore it grieves me right sore, the departing of this fellowship." And therewith the tears fell in his eyes.

CHAPTER IV

HOW THE KNIGHTS DEPARTED

WHEN the queen, ladies, and gentlewomen wist these tidings, they had such sorrow and heaviness of heart that no tongue might tell it; for those knights had held those ladies in honour and love. And many of these ladies that loved knights would have gone with their lovers, had not an old knight come among them in religious clothing and he spake to all, and said, "Fair lords, who have sworn in the quest of the Sangreal, thus sendeth Nacien, the hermit, word to you, that none lead lady nor gentlewoman with him in this quest; for I warn you plain, he that is not clean of his sins, shall not see the mysteries of our Lord Jesus Christ." And for this cause they left those ladies and gentlewomen.

And as soon as it was day, the king arose, for he had no rest all that night for sorrow. And he

and the queen and all the fellowship of the Round Table went unto the minster to hear their service. Then after the service was done, the king would wit how many had undertaken the quest of the Holy Grail. Then they found by tale an hundred and fifty, and all were knights of the Round Table. And then they put on their helms and departed; and there was weeping and great sorrow.

CHAPTER V

HOW GALAHAD GAT HIM A SHIELD

Now rideth Sir Galahad yet without shield, and so he rode four days without any adventure. And at the fourth day after evensong he came to a white abbey, and there he was received with great reverence, and led unto a chamber, and unarmed. And then was he aware of two knights of the Round Table; one was Sir Bagdemagus, and that other was Sir Uwaine. And when they saw him, they went unto Galahad, and made him welcome, and so they went unto supper.

“Sirs,” said Galahad, “what adventure brought you hither?”

“Sir,” said they, “it is told us that within this place is a shield that no man may bear about his neck, unless he be the worthiest knight of the world, without being injured or stricken dead within three days.”

“ Well,” said Bagdemagus, “ I wot well that I am not the best knight in the world, but yet I shall essay to bear it.” And then he said unto Galahad, “ If it please you, abide here till you wit how I succeed; for if I may not achieve the adventure of this shield, you shall take it unto you, for I am sure you shall not fail.”

“ I right well agree thereto,” said Galahad, “ for I have no shield.”

Then Sir Bagdemagus took with him a good squire to bring tidings unto Sir Galahad how he fared.

Then when they had ridden a mile or two and come to a fair valley before an hermitage, they saw a knight come from that part in white armour, horse and all; and he came as fast as his horse might run full upon Bagdemagus and struck him so hard that he broke the mails, and thrust him through the right shoulder. And then he alighted and took the white shield from Bagdemagus, and gave it to Bagdemagus’ squire and said: “ Bear this shield unto the good knight Sir Galahad, and greet him well for me: for this shield belongeth unto no man but Galahad.”

And as the book telleth, Bagdemagus lay sick long, and escaped hard with his life.

CHAPTER VI

HOW KING EVELAKE RECEIVED THE SHIELD
OF JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA

“SIR GALAHAD,” said the squire, “that knight that wounded Bagdemagus sendeth you greeting, and bade that you should bear this shield.”

“Now blessed be God and fortune,” said Galahad. And then he asked for his arms, and mounted upon his horse, and hung the white shield about his neck, and commended him unto God. And so departed Galahad.

Then within a while came Galahad to where the white knight abode by the hermitage, and each saluted the other courteously.

“Sir,” said Galahad, “whence came this shield?”

“Sir,” said the knight, “it befell, after the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ thirty-two years, that Joseph of Arimathea, the gentle knight, who took our Lord off the holy cross, at that time departed from Jerusalem with a great party of his kindred. And so they journeyed till they came to a city hight Sarras. At this time, there was a king hight Evelake that made great war against the Saracens,¹ and in especial against one Saracen, his cousin, a great and mighty king. So on a day these two met to do battle. Then Joseph,

¹ Saracens here refers to the people of Sarras.

the son of Joseph of Arimathea, went to King Evelake and told him that he should be discomfited and slain unless he left his belief of the old law and believed upon the new law. And then he shewed him the right belief, to which King Evelake agreed with all his heart, and there this shield was made for King Evelake in the name of Him that died upon the Cross. And then King Evelake was baptized and so for the most part were all the people of that city. So, soon afterward, Joseph would depart, and King Evelake would go with him. And so by fortune they came into this land that was called Great Britain.

“Not long after that Joseph lay on his death-bed, and King Evelake made much sorrow, and begged Joseph to leave him some token of his to think on him. Joseph said, ‘That will I do full gladly; now bring me your shield that I gave you.’ And there upon that shield he made a cross of his own blood. ‘Now you may see a remembrance that I love you: this shield shall be always as fresh as it is now; and never shall any man bear this shield about his neck but he shall repent it, until the time that Galahad, the good knight, bear it, and he shall do many marvellous deeds.’ And so that day that they set is come, and you have your shield.”

And then the white knight vanished away.

Anon as the squire heard these words, he alighted off his hackney, and kneeled at Galahad’s

feet, and prayed him that he might go with him till he had made him knight. "Yea, I would not refuse you," said Galahad. So he made him knight, and they turned again into the abbey where they came from; and there men made great joy of Sir Galahad.

CHAPTER VII

HOW SIR GALAHAD MET WITH SIR LAUNCELOT AND SIR PERCIVALE AND SMOTE THEM DOWN

THEN departed Galahad from the abbey, and rode till he came to a waste forest, and there he met Sir Launcelot and Sir Percivale, but they knew him not, for he was new disguised. Right so Sir Launcelot dressed his spear and brake it upon Sir Galahad, and Galahad smote him so again that he smote down horse and man. And then he drew his sword, and dressed him unto Sir Percivale, and smote him on the helm, and had not the sword swerved, Sir Percivale had been slain.

This joust was done before an hermitage where a recluse dwelled. And when she saw Sir Galahad ride away, she said, "God be with thee, best knight of the world. Ah, certes," she said all aloud, that Launcelot and Percivale might hear it, "an yonder two knights had known thee as well as I do they would not have encountered

with thee." Then perceived they both that this was Galahad, and up they gat on their horses and rode fast after him, but in a while he was out of sight.

Then Sir Launcelot rode headlong into a wild forest, and held no path but as wild adventure led him, and at last he came to a stony cross which departed two ways into waste land.

Then Sir Launcelot looked by and saw an old chapel, and he went to the door, and within he found a fair altar full richly arrayed with cloth of clean silk, and there stood a fair clean candlestick, which bare six great candles. Then Sir Launcelot let his horse pasture, and unlaced his helm and ungirt his sword, and laid him down to sleep upon his shield before the cross.

And half waking and half sleeping, he saw come by him two palfreys all fair and white, the which bare a litter, therein lying a sick knight. And when he was nigh the cross he abode there still. And Sir Launcelot heard him say, "O sweet Lord, when shall this sorrow leave me? and when shall the holy vessel come by me wherethrough I shall be blessed? For I have endured thus long for little trespass."

With that Sir Launcelot saw the candlestick with the six tapers come before the cross, and he saw nobody that brought it. Also there came a table of silver and the holy vessel of the Sangreal. And therewith the sick knight set him up, and

held up both his hands and said, "Fair sweet Lord, which is here within this holy vessel, give unto me that I may be whole of this malady." And therewith on his hands and on his knees he went so nigh that he touched the holy vessel, and kissed it and anon he was whole. Then he said, "Lord God, I thank Thee for I am healed of this sickness."

Then the sick knight dressed him up and kissed the cross; anon his squire brought him his arms, and said, "Sir, I have brought all your arms save your helm and your sword, and therefore by mine assent, now may ye take this sleeping knight's helm and his sword." And so he did. And when he was clean armed, he took Sir Launcelot's horse, for it was better than his; and so departed they from the cross.

All this Sir Launcelot beheld, for he slept not verily. Then when the sick knight had gone, Sir Launcelot waked and set him up, and when he missed his horse and his harness then he wist well God was displeased with him. For if he had been a clean knight, he would have awaked when the holy vessel was brought before him. So he departed on foot into a forest, and so by prime he came to an hermitage where dwelled an holy man. And Launcelot kneeled before him and confessed all his fault, and repented sore. And the good man made him do such penance as was good for his soul, and so was Sir Launcelot

shiven. And after that he gat him another horse and harness, and did many great deeds of arms.

CHAPTER VIII

HOW GALAHAD RODE WITH PERCIVALE'S SISTER

Now saith this story, Galahad rode into a waste forest wherein he found many adventures which he brought to an end, whereof the story maketh here no mention. And the good knight Galahad rode until he came at night to the Castle of Carbonek, where he spent that night at an hermitage.

Then when they were at rest there came a gentlewoman knocking at the door, and called Galahad, and said, "Galahad, arm yourself, and mount upon your horse and follow me, for I shall show you within these three days the highest adventure that ever any knight saw."

Anon Galahad armed him, and took his horse, and made the gentlewoman go, and he would follow.

So she rode as fast as her palfrey could bear her, till she came to a sea. And at night she came unto a castle; and she entered into the castle with Galahad, and there he had great cheer, for the lady of the castle was the damsels lady.

So when he was unarmed, then said the damsels: "Madam, shall we abide here all this day?"

“ Nay,” said she, “ only till he hath dined, and till he hath slept a little.”

So he ate and slept a while till the maid called him, and armed him by torchlight. Then when both were horsed, they departed from the castle and rode till they came to the sea. And there they found a ship, wherein were Bors and Percivale.

On beholding Galahad they cried out, “ Sir, you are welcome; we have long waited for you.” Then Galahad greeted them with great joy and he and the damsel left their horses and entered into the ship; and so the wind arose and drove them through the sea at a marvellous pace. And after a while the day dawned.

By then the ship arrived betwixt two rocks, great and marvellous, where there was another ship.

“ Let us go thither,” said the gentlewoman, “ and we shall see adventures, for this is our Lord’s will.”

And when they came thither, they found the ship rich enough, but there was neither man nor woman therein. But in the end of the ship were fair letters written, which said a dreadful word and marvellous: —

“ Thou man, which shall enter into this ship, beware thou be steadfast in thy belief, for I am Faith; and if thou fail, I shall not help thee.”

Then said the gentlewoman, “ Percivale, wit ye who I am?”

“ Certainly not,” said he.

“Wit you well,” said she, “that I am thy sister, daughter of King Pellinore; and therefore you are the man in the world that I most love; and if you have not perfect belief in Jesus Christ, enter not into this ship, for then should you perish in it.”

When Percivale understood that she was his sister, he was very glad, and said, “Fair sister, I shall enter therein, for if I be a sinful creature or an untrue knight there shall I perish.”

CHAPTER IX

HOW GALAHAD ENTERED A SHIP, AND OF THE MARVELLOUS THINGS HE SAW

So Galahad and the gentlewoman and Sir Bors and Sir Percivale entered therein. And they saw the ship so fair and rich that they marvelled. In the midst of the ship was a fair bed, and Galahad went thereto, and found a crown of silk. And at the feet was a sword, rich and fair, and it was drawn out of the sheath a half foot or more, and the pommel was of stone, and there was in the stone all manner of colours that any man might find. And the scales of the haft were of two ribs of different beasts. The one beast was a serpent, and is called the Serpent of the Fiend; and the bone of it has such virtue that no hand that handleth it shall ever be weary or hurt. And

the other beast is a fish that haunteth the flood of Euphrates ; and the bones of it are of such kind that he who handleth them shall never be weary, and he shall not think on joy or sorrow that he hath had, but only on that thing that he beholdeth before him. And so for this sword, there shall only one man grip it at the handles ; but he shall surpass all others.

“ In the name of God,” said Sir Percivale, “ I shall essay to handle it.” So he set his hand to the sword, but he could not stir it. Then Bors set his hand thereto, but he also failed.

Then Galahad beheld the sword and saw letters like blood that said : —

“ Let no one essay to draw me out of my sheath, unless he be braver than any other ; for if such an one draweth me he shall bring great shame to his body, or be wounded to the death.”

“ By my faith,” said Galahad, “ I would draw this sword out of the sheath, but the offence is too great.”

“ Know,” said the gentlewoman, “ that the drawing of this sword is warned to all men save only to you.”

And then beheld they the scabbard. It seemed to be of a serpent’s skin, and thereon were letters of gold and silver. And the girdle was but poor, and not fit to sustain such a rich sword. And the letters said : —

“He who shall wield me ought to be braver than any other, if he bear me truly as I ought to be borne. For he by whose body I ought to hang shall never be ashamed while he is girt with this girdle. And let no one be so rash as to do away with this girdle; for it ought not to be done away except by the hands of a maid who is a king’s daughter. And she must be a maid all the days of her life; and if ever she cease so to be, she shall die the most villainous death that ever woman died.”

Then they turned the sword over; it was red as blood, with letters black as coal, which said:—

“He that shall praise me most, most shall find me to blame at time of great need; and to whom I should be most debonair shall I be most felon, unless he be the best knight in the world.”

CHAPTER X

OF KING PELLES THE MAIMED KING

“FAIR brother,” said the gentlewoman, “there was a king, hight Pelles, the Maimed King.¹ And while he was able to ride he was loyal to Christendom and Holy Church. So upon a day he hunted in a wood of his which continued unto the sea; and at the last he lost all his hounds and his knights save only one; and he and this knight went till they came toward Ireland, and there he

¹ See “Balin and Balan,” chap. xvii, p. 75.

found the ship. And when he saw the letters and understood them, yet he entered, for his life was right pure; but his knight had no hardihood to enter. And there King Pelles found this sword; and drew it out, as far as you see it now. And thereupon he was smitten with a spear through both thighs, and never may he be healed until we come to him. Thus was King Pelles, your grandsire, maimed for his hardihood."

"In the name of God, damsel," said Galahad.

CHAPTER XI

OF THE WONDERFUL TALE OF KING SOLOMON

So they went toward the bed to behold everything about it, and above the head were hung two swords. Also there were two spindles which were as white as snow, and others that were as red as blood, and others above green as any emerald; of these three colours were the spindles, and of natural colour within, and without any painting.

"These spindles," said the damsel, "are made from the branch which Eve took when she gathered the fruit for which Adam and she were put out of paradise. Eve perceived that the branch was fair and green, and she thought to keep it as long as she might. So she put it in the earth, and by the will of our Lord it grew to a great tree in a little while.

“And the tree endured until Solomon, King David’s son, reigned and held the land after his father. This Solomon was wise, and knew all the virtues of stones and trees, and so he knew the course of the stars, and many other things. This Solomon had an evil wife, and because of her he thought there had been no good woman, and so he despised them in his books. So a voice spoke to him once in this wise: ‘Solomon, if sorrow come to a man by a woman, think not that it is always so; for yet shall there come a woman who shall bring joy an hundred times greater than the heaviness which giveth sorrow; and that woman shall be born of thy lineage.’ Also the Holy Ghost showed him the coming of the glorious Virgin Mary. ‘And,’ said the voice, ‘there shall come a man, the last of your blood, and he shall be as good a knight as Duke Joshua.’

“Then was Solomon glad that there should come such an one of his lineage; but ever he marvelled and studied who that should be. His wife perceived that he studied, and so she asked of him the cause of his studying, and there he told her what the voice had told him. ‘Well,’ said she, ‘I shall have made a ship of the best wood and most durable that man may find.’ So Solomon sent for all the carpenters of the land, and the best. And when they had made the ship, the lady said, ‘Sir, since this knight is to pass all others in chivalry, I tell you to go into our

Lord's temple where is the sword of King David, your father, which is the sharpest and most marvellous, and take it. And take off the pommel and make you a pommel of precious stones ; and afterward make an hilt, the most wonderful and marvellous, and after that make a marvellous sheath. And when you have made all these, I shall make a girdle thereto, such as shall please me.'

" So King Solomon did as she had commanded. And when the ship was ready in the sea to sail, the lady had made a great bed, marvellous and rich, and covered with silk, and laid the sword at the feet, and the girdles were of hemp. And therewith the king was angry. ' Sir, wit ye well,' said the lady, ' that I have no thing rich enough to support so high a sword. But a maid shall bring other knights thereto, though I wot not when it shall be ; and she shall be a king's daughter, and she shall make such a girdle as is fit to sustain so marvellous a sword.'

" And then she had made those spindles and fastened them upon the bed. And King Solomon thought it all the most marvellous thing he had seen.

" That night Solomon lay before the ship. And when he was asleep, he thought there came from heaven a great company of angels, who alighted upon the ship, and took water from a silver vessel brought by an angel, and sprinkled

all the ship. And afterward, an angel came to the sword and drew letters upon the hilt ; and afterward went to the ship's board, and wrote there other letters which said :—

“ ‘ Thou man that wilt enter within me, beware that thou be perfect in the faith, for I am Faith and Belief.’ ”

When Solomon espied these letters he was abashed, so that he durst not enter, and so he drew back. But the ship was shoved into the sea, and it went so fast that he lost sight of it within a little while. And then a little voice said, ‘ Solomon, the last knight of thy lineage shall rest in this bed.’ Then Solomon went and awaked his wife, and told her of the adventures of the ship.”

CHAPTER XII

HOW THE DAMSEL MADE A GIRDLE FOR THE SWORD

Now when the damsel had finished her story, the three knights went and looked at the bed. Then they lifted up a cloth and found a rich purse, and therein they found an account of the ship, whence it came and by whom it was made.

“ Now,” said Galahad, “ where shall we find the gentlewoman that shall make new girdles to the sword ? ”

“Fair sir,” said Percivale’s sister, “be not dismayed, for, by the leave of God, I have made such a girdle as belongs to the sword.”

And then she opened a box and took out girdles which were seemingly made of golden threads, and set full of precious stones, and a rich buckle of gold. “Lo, lords,” said she, “here is the girdle that ought to sustain the sword. And wit ye well the greatest part of this girdle was made of my hair, which I loved well when I was a woman of the world. But as soon as I wist that this adventure was ordained me, I clipped off my hair, and made this girdle in the name of God.”

Then went the gentlewoman and set it on the girdle of the sword. Then said they to Galahad, “In the name of Jesus Christ we pray you to gird yourself with your sword.”

“Now let me begin,” said Galahad, “to grip this sword to give you courage; but wit ye well, it belongeth no more to me than it doth to you.”

And then he gripped it about with his fingers, and drew it from the sheath, and the maiden girt him about the middle with the sword. “Now, care I not though I die, for I hold myself one of the blessed maidens of the world, which hath made the worthiest knight of the world.”

“Damsel,” said Galahad, “you have done so much that I shall be your knight all the days of my life.”

Then they went from that ship back to the other, and the wind drove them into the sea a great pace.

CHAPTER XIII

HOW GALAHAD AND HIS FELLOWS SLEW THEIR ADVERSARIES

Now in the morning the ship came to a castle that men call Carteloise that was in Scotland. And when they had passed the port, the gentlewoman said, "There are men here, who if they wist ye were of King Arthur's court, would surely assail you."

"Damsel," said Galahad, "He that carried us safely out of the rocks shall deliver us from them."

So it befell as they spoke thus, a squire came by them, and asked who they were; and they said they were of King Arthur's court.

"Is that true?" said he. "Now by my head, you are ill arrayed."

Then he turned again unto the cliff fortress, and within a while they heard an horn blow. And immediately there came knights well armed, and bade them yield or else to die. But Percivale smote the foremost to the earth, and took his horse and mounted thereupon, and the same did Galahad. Also Bors served another so, for they had no horses in this country, having left their when they went upon the ship. And so

when they were horsed they set upon those knights, and pursued them into the strong fortress and slew them.

Then when they beheld the multitude of people they had slain, they thought themselves great sinners.

“Surely,” said Bors, “if God had loved these people, we should not have had power to slay them thus. But they have done so much against our Lord that He would not suffer them to reign longer.”

“Say you not so,” said Galahad, “for if they did evil in God’s sight, the vengeance is not ours but His who hath the power thereof.”

At that time there came out of the hall a good man who was a priest. And when he saw those who lay dead he was astonished. And Galahad took off his helmet and kneeled down, and so did his two fellows. Then asked the good man how those people were slain and Galahad told him.

“Sir,” said Galahad, “I repent much, inasmuch as they were christened.”

“Nay, repent ye not,” said the priest, “for they were not christened. Truly, if ye lived as long as the world endured, ye could not have done a better deed than this. And now I shall tell you what I know of this castle.

“Here lived Lord Earl Hernoxt, and he had three sons and a daughter, the fairest gentlewoman men ever saw. But these knights slew

their sister, and put her father in prison; but a cousin of hers rescued him. And then they did great evil: they slew clerks and priests, and beat down chapels, that our Lord's service might not be said. And this same day her father sent to me to be confessed; but such shame had man never to endure as I had from the three brethren. But the earl bade me suffer, for he said they should not live long, for three servants of our Lord should destroy them. And now ye are come and it is brought to an end. And by this may ye know that our Lord is not displeased with your deeds."

And they brought the Earl Hernox out of prison, and he knew Galahad at once, although he had never before seen him, except by revelation of our Lord.

Then he began to weep tenderly, and said, "Long have I awaited your coming."

And then a voice on high said, so that all heard, "Galahad, well hast thou avenged Me on God's enemies. Now go thee to the Maimed King as soon as thou mayest, for he shall receive by thee health which he hath long waited for."

CHAPTER XIV

WHAT THE KNIGHTS SAW IN A FOREST

THEN departed the three knights, and Percivale's sister with them. And so they came into a

waste forest, and there they saw a white hart led by four lions. Then they followed that hart to know whither it went; and so they rode until they came to an hermitage where a good man dwelled, and the hart and the lions entered. So they turned into the chapel, and there they saw the hart become a man, and set himself upon the altar in a rich siege; and the four lions were changed, one to the form of a man, one to the form of a lion, the third to the form of an eagle, and the fourth was changed into an ox. Then they took their siege where the hart sat, and afterward, all went out through a glass window, and nothing was broken.

Now when Galahad and his fellows saw this, they were awed, and fell to the earth, and a wonderful light shone all about them. Then they went to the good man, and asked, "What is this we have seen?"

And he answered, "Now, lords, I know well ye are the good knights who shall achieve the Holy Grail; for unto you the Lord hath shown great secrets. Our Lord appeared as a white hart without spot, and the four who were with Him were the four evangelists who put into writing our Lord's deeds when He walked a man upon earth. And never before has knight known the truth. But I suppose henceforth ye shall see more."

And then they rejoiced much, and dwelled

there all that day. And upon the morrow when they had heard mass, they departed.

CHAPTER XV

HOW THEY CAME TO A CASTLE, AND HOW PERCIVALE'S SISTER YIELDED THE CUSTOM OF THE CASTLE

AND so they came to a castle and would have passed by, but a knight came after them, and begged them to yield the custom of the castle before passing on. Then the three knights asked what the custom was and why it was.

“What it is,” said he, “I will tell you truly. There is in this castle a gentlewoman, and the castle is hers. Many years ago there fell upon her a malady, and from no leech can she get remedy. But at last an old man said that if she might be anointed with a dish full of the blood of a maid, and a king’s daughter, that blood should be her health. And for this was this custom made.”

“Now,” said Percivale’s sister, “I see well that this gentlewoman is all but dead; and so to-morrow I shall yield your custom of this castle.”

“Certainly,” said Galahad, “if you bleed so much you may die.”

“Truly,” said she, “if I die to heal her I shall

get great honour, and honour to my lineage. And better is one harm than twain."

And there was great joy in the castle because she would yield the custom of the castle.

On the morn, when they had heard mass, Sir Percivale's sister bade them bring forth the sick lady, and she was in evil case. Then said she, "Who shall give me blood?" Then Percivale's sister came forth, and let out her blood until the dish was full.

Then she lifted up her hand and said to the lady, "Madam, I have come to my death to make you whole: for God's love, pray for me." With that she fell in a swoon, and Galahad and his two fellows lifted her up, and staunched the flow of blood, but she had bled so much she could not live. When she awaked, she said, "Fair brother Percivale, I die for the healing of this lady. And when I am dead, bury me not in this country, but put me in a boat at the next port, and let me go as adventure will lead me. And as soon as you three are come to the city Sarras, to achieve the Holy Grail, you shall find me arrived under a tower, and bury me there. For I say to you so much, there Galahad shall be buried, and you also in the same place."

Then Percivale, weeping, granted her wish, and then the soul departed from her body. The same day was the lady healed. Then Percivale made a letter of all the strange adventures which she had

helped them to achieve, and he put it in her right hand, and laid her in a barge, and covered it with black silk. And the wind arose and drove the barge from the land, and the knights beheld it till it was out of sight. Then they all withdrew to the castle, and forthwith there came a sudden tempest of thunder and lightning and rain. Then they heard a voice say, "Lords and fellows, to-morrow at dawn ye three shall part, and go your way till adventure bring you to the Maimed King."

And on the morn they took off their helmets and kissed each other and departed on their ways.

CHAPTER XVI

HOW GALAHAD AND HIS FELLOWS WERE FED OF THE SANGREAL

Now, saith this story, Galahad rode many journeys, and had many strange adventures. And then after many months he rode toward the castle of the Maimed King. On the way thither he met Sir Percivale, and each told the other what adventures he had achieved. So one day it befell that they came out of a great forest and there they met Sir Bors, who rode alone. And they saluted him, and he told them his adventures, and they yielded him honour.

Then said Bors, "It is more than a year and a half since I slept ten times where men dwell;

my bed has been in the wild forests and in the mountains, but God was ever my comfort."

Then rode they a great while till they came to the castle of Carbonek. Then there was great joy, for they wist well that they had fulfilled the quest of the Sangreal. And a little before evening, as they sat in the hall it was full of great heat. And then as they waited, four gentlewomen brought a bed out of a chamber; and in the bed lay a sick man, with a crown of gold upon his head. And there in the midst of the place they set him down, and went their way.

Then he lifted up his head, and said, "Galahad, knight, you are welcome, for long have I waited for you, and much have I desired your coming; for in this pain and this anguish I have been long. But now I trust to God the time has come when my pain shall be allayed."

At that time it seemed to them that there came a man in the likeness of a bishop, and he had a cross in his hand. And four angels bore him up in a chair, and set him down before a table of silver on which the Sangreal was. And then they heard the chamber door open, and there they saw angels; two bore candles of wax, the third a towel, and the fourth a spear which bled marvelously. And three drops fell within a box which he held in his other hand. And they set the candles upon the table, and the towel upon the vessel, and the holy spear upright upon the vessel.

And then the bishop took up the bread of the sacrament, and in it there seemed to come a figure in the likeness of a child, and the visage was as red and bright as any fire. And then he put it into the holy vessel again, and went to Galahad and kissed him, and bade him to kiss his fellows.

“Now,” said the bishop unto them, “servants of Jesus Christ, ye shall be fed before this table with food sweeter than ever knights tasted before.”

Then they looked and saw a Man come out of the holy vessel that had all the signs of the passion of Jesus Christ, and He said, “My knights, and My servants, and My true children, I will now no longer hide Me from you, but ye shall see now a part of My secrets and of My hidden things. Now hold and receive the high meat which ye have so much desired.” Then He himself took the holy vessel and came to Galahad ; and Galahad kneeled down, and there he received his Saviour, and after him so received his fellows.

Then said He to Galahad, “Son, this is the holy dish from which I ate the lamb at the Last Supper. And now hast thou seen that which thou most desired to see, but yet hast thou not seen it so openly as thou shalt in the city of Sarras. Therefore thou must go hence, and bear with thee the holy vessel ; for this night it shall depart from the realm of Logris and it shall

never be seen here more. And knowest thou why? He is not rightly served or worshipped by the people of this land, for they have turned to evil living; therefore I shall disinherit them of the honour I have done them.

“Therefore go ye there to-morrow unto the sea, where ye shall find your ship ready, and with you take the sword with the strange girdles, but take no other knights with you. Also take with you the blood of this spear to anoint the Maimed King, and he shall have health. And two of you shall die in My service, but one of you shall come again and tell tidings.”

Then He gave them His blessing and vanished away.

CHAPTER XVII

HOW KING PELLES WAS HEALED, AND HOW THE KNIGHTS WENT TO SARRAS

ANON Galahad went to the spear which lay upon the table, and touched the blood with his fingers, and went to the Maimed King and anointed his legs. And therewith the king clothed himself, and started upon his feet out of bed a whole man, and thanked our Lord that He had healed him.

That same night about midnight came a voice among them which said, “Go ye hence where ye may best do as I shall bid you.”

So Galahad departed with Percivale and Bors;

and so they rode three days until they came to the shore and found the ship whereof they had been told. And when they went on board they found the table of silver which they had left with the Maimed King, and the Sangreal covered with red samite. Then were they glad to have such things in their keeping, and so they entered and made great reverence thereto.

So long were they in the ship that they said to Galahad, "Sir, in this bed ought you to lie, for so saith the scripture." So he laid him down and slept, and when he awoke he saw before him the city of Sarras.

And as they would have landed they saw the ship wherein Percivale had put his sister. Then they took out of the ship the table of silver, and Percivale and Bors carried it, and Galahad came behind. And so they went to the city, and at the gate of the city they saw an old man and crooked. Then Galahad bade him help to bear this heavy thing.

"Truly," said the old man, "it is ten years since I could go without crutches."

"Care thou not," said Galahad; "arise up and shew thy good will."

And so he essayed and found himself as whole as ever he was. And anon there arose great noise in the city, that a cripple was made whole by marvellous knights who had come into the city.

Then anon soon afterward the three knights

went to the water and brought up into the palace Percivale's sister, and buried her as richly as a king's daughter ought to be. And when the king of the city, who was hight Estorause, saw the fellowship, he asked them what it was they had brought upon the silver table. And they told him the truth of the Sangreal. There the king was a tyrant, and came from the line of pagans, and he took them and put them in prison in a deep hole.

CHAPTER XVIII

HOW GALAHAD WAS MADE KING

BUT as soon as they were there, our Lord sent them the Sangreal, through whose grace they were always fed while they were in prison.

At the year's end it befell that the king lay sick, and felt that he should die. Then he sent for the three knights, and begged their mercy for what he had done, and they forgave him readily. And he died anon.

When the king was dead, all the city was dismayed, and wist not who might be their king. And while they were in counsel came a voice, saying, "Choose the youngest of the three knights to be your king." So they made Galahad king by the assent of all the city. And he had made above the table of silver a chest of gold and of

precious stones to contain the holy vessel. And every day the three fellows would come before it and make their prayers.

CHAPTER XIX

OF THE PASSING OF GALAHAD

Now at the year's end, Galahad and his fellows arose up early, and came to the palace. And they saw before them the holy vessel, and a man in the likeness of a bishop kneeling before it, and he had about him a great fellowship of angels, as if he had been Jesus Christ himself ; and then he arose and began a mass.

And when he came to the Sacrament of the mass, and had done, anon he called Galahad to him and said, "Come forth, thou servant of Jesus Christ, and thou shalt see that which thou hast much desired to see."

Then Galahad began to tremble hard as he beheld the spiritual things. Then he lifted up his hands toward heaven, and said, "Lord, I thank Thee. And now, blessed Lord, would I not longer live, if it might please Thee, Lord." And therewith the good man took our Lord's body betwixt his hands, and proffered it to Galahad, and he received it gladly and meekly.

"Now, knowest thou who I am ?" said the good man.

“Nay,” said Galahad.

“I am Joseph of Arimathea, whom our Lord hath sent here to bear thee fellowship. And He hath sent me, because thou hast resembled me in two things : in that thou hast seen the marvels of the Sangreal ; in that thou hast been a clean maiden knight, as I have been and am.”

And when he had said these words, Galahad went to Percivale and kissed him and commended him to God ; and so he went to Sir Bors and kissed him and commended him to God. And therewith he kneeled down and made his prayers, and then suddenly his soul departed, and they saw a great multitude of angels bear his soul up to heaven. Also the two fellows saw come from heaven a hand, and it came right to the vessel and took it and the spear, and so bare it up to heaven. Since that time there was never man so daring as to say that he had seen the Sangreal.

CHAPTER XX

OF THE SORROWS OF BORS AND PERCIVALE

WHEN Percivale and Bors saw Galahad dead, they made as much sorrow as ever did two men. And if they had not been good men they might have despaired. Then they buried Galahad beside Percivale’s sister ; and as soon as he was buried, Percivale entered an hermitage and took

religious clothing. And Bors was always with him, but never changed he his secular clothing, for he purposed to go again into the realm of Logris. Thus a year and two months lived Sir Percivale a full and holy life, and then passed out of the world. And Bors buried him by his sister and Galahad.

And then Bors entered into a ship and sailed till he came into the realm of Logris, and he rode fast till he came to Camelot where King Arthur was. And there was great joy in the court over his return; for they had thought him dead. And then he told them of his adventures, and how Galahad achieved the quest of the Sangreal, and Launcelot told of the adventures of the Sangreal that he had seen. And all this was made into great books, and put up in chests in Salisbury.

And so here endeth the marvellous tale of the quest of the Holy Grail.

BOOK IV

LAUNCELOT AND ELAINE

CHAPTER I

HOW LAUNCELOT WENT TO ASTOLAT AND ACCEPTED A TOKEN FROM ELAINE

So after the quest of the Sangreal was fulfilled and all knights that were left alive were come again unto the Table Round, then was there great joy in the court: and in especial King Arthur and Queen Guenever rejoiced over the remnant that were come home. And passing glad were they of the return of Sir Launcelot and Sir Bors, for they had been long away in the quest of the Sangreal.

And then to do honour to their return, the king called a great joust and a tournament at Camelot, that is Winchester. And the king let it be known that he and the King of Scots would joust against all that would come against them. And when this cry was made, thither came many knights.

So King Arthur made him ready to depart to these jousts, and he would have had the queen with him; but at that time she was sick and could

not ride. And Sir Launcelot would not ride with the king ; for, he said, he was not yet whole of a wound which he had received. Wherefore the king was passing wroth and departed toward Winchester with a heavy heart.

Now after the king was gone, the queen called Sir Launcelot to her, and said thus : "Sir Launcelot, you are greatly to blame thus to refuse to go with my lord. What think you will your enemies say ?"

"Madam," said Sir Launcelot, "I admit your wisdom. And therefore, madam, at this time I will be ruled by your counsel. This night, I will take my rest, and to-morrow early, I will take my way toward Winchester. But wit you well that at that joust I will be against the king and all his fellowship."

"You may there do as you list," said the queen, "but, by my counsel, you shall not be against your king and fellowship."

And so upon the morn early, Sir Launcelot heard mass, and brake his fast, and so took his leave of the queen, and departed. And then he rode until he came to Astolat, and there it happened in the evening that he came to an old baron's place, that hight Sir Bernard of Astolat.

Now it chanced that King Arthur was lodged that night at Astolat, and so as Sir Launcelot entered into his lodging, King Arthur espied him, and knew him full well.

“It is well,” said King Arthur unto the knights that were with him: “I have now espied one knight that I undertake will do marvels at the jousts to which we are going.”

“Who is that?” asked the knights.

“Ye shall not know from me,” said the king. And so he smiled, and went to his rest.

Now when Sir Launcelot had unarmed him in his chamber, the old baron came to him and welcomed him in his best manner, but he knew not Sir Launcelot.

“Fair sir,” said Sir Launcelot to his host, “I would pray you to lend me a shield that is not openly known, for mine is well known.”

“Sir,” said his host, “you shall have your desire; for methinks you are one of the likeliest knights of the world; and therefore, I shall show you friendship. Wit you well: I have two sons that were but late made knights. And the eldest, hight Sir Tirre, was hurt the same day that he was made knight, so that he may not ride, and you shall have his shield; for it is not known any place but here. And if it pleases you, my youngest son, hight Lavaine, shall ride with you unto the jousts. And much my heart telleth me that you are a noble knight. Therefore, I pray you, tell me your name.”

“As for that,” said Sir Launcelot, “you must hold me excused at this time; but if God give me grace to speed well at the jousts, I shall come

again and tell you. But I pray you, in any case, let me have your son, Sir Lavaine, with me, and let me have his brother's shield."

"All this shall be done," said Sir Bernard.

Now this old baron had a daughter that was called the Fair Maiden of Astolat. And ever she beheld Sir Launcelot wonderingly; and as the book saith, this maiden, hight Elaine, cast such a love unto Sir Launcelot, that she could never withdraw her love. So, thus, as she came to and fro, her love for Sir Launcelot waxed so hot that she besought him to wear upon him at the jousts a token¹ of hers.

"Fair damsel," said Sir Launcelot, "if I grant you that, you may say I do more for your love than ever I did for lady or damsel."

Then he remembered that he wished to go to the jousts disguised. And because he had never before that time borne any manner of token of any damsel, he bethought him that he would bear one of her, that none of his blood thereby might know him. So he said, "Fair maiden, I will wear a token of yours upon mine helmet, therefore show me what it is."

"Sir," she said, "it is a red sleeve of mine, well embroidered with great pearls."

¹ It was often the custom for a knight to wear upon him at the jousts some *token* of the lady he loved or honored. Usually, it was something she had made for him, but it might be her favorite color, her favorite flower, or any other little thing identified with her.

And so she brought it to him, and Sir Launcelot received it, and said, "Never before did I so much for any damsel." And then Sir Launcelot gave his shield into the keeping of this fair maid and prayed her to keep that until he came again.

CHAPTER II

OF THE TOURNEY AT WINCHESTER, AND HOW SIR LAUNCELOT WAS HURT

So on the morn, King Arthur and all his knights departed, for the king had tarried three days to wait for his noble knights. And then when the king had gone, Sir Launcelot and Sir Lavaine made them ready to depart. And both of them had white shields, and the red sleeve Sir Launcelot carried with him. They took their leave of Sir Bernard, the old baron, and of his daughter, the Fair Maiden of Astolat; and then they rode until they came to Camelot. And there they found a great throng of kings, dukes, earls, and barons, and many noble knights. But by means of Sir Lavaine, Sir Launcelot was lodged privily with a rich burgess, so that no man in town was ware that he was there.

And so they reposèd them until the tourney should begin. Then trumpets blew upon the field, and King Arthur was set high upon a scaffold to behold who did best. But as the book saith,

King Arthur would not allow Sir Gawaine to go from him; for never had Sir Gawaine the chance of winning, if Sir Launcelot were in the field.

Then some of the kings, as King Anguish of Ireland, and the King of Scots, were that time turned upon the side of Arthur. And then on the other side was the King of Northgalis, and the King of the Hundred Knights, and the King of Northumberland.

Then every man made him ready in his best manner to do what he might. And Sir Launcelot made him ready, and put the red sleeve upon his head and fastened it fast. And so Sir Launcelot and Sir Lavaine rode privily out of Winchester into a little leaved wood behind the party that was to fight against King Arthur's party; and there they waited till the parties smote together.

Then came in the King of Scots and the King of Ireland on Arthur's party, and against them came the King of Northumberland, and the King with the Hundred Knights. And the King with the Hundred Knights smote down King Anguish of Ireland. So then there began a strong attack upon both parties. And there came in Sir Brandiles, Sir Sagramore, Sir Dodinas, Sir Kay, Sir Griflet, Sir Mordred, and others, in all fifteen knights of the Round Table. So these, with others, beat back the King of Northumberland and the King of Northgalis.

Then said Sir Launcelot, “Now, if you will help me a little, you shall see yonder fellowship, that now chaseth these men on our side, go as fast backward as they went forward.”

“Sir,” said Sir Lavaine, “spare not, for I shall do what I can to help you.”

Then Sir Launcelot and Sir Lavaine came in at the thickest of the press ; and there Sir Launcelot smote down many knights, and Sir Lavaine smote down others, until the knights of the Round Table drew back.

“O my lord,” said Sir Gawaine to King Arthur, “what knight is that yonder that doth such marvellous deeds of arms in that field ?”

“I wot well who he is,” said King Arthur, “but at this time I will not name him. But he will be better known and do more before he departs.”

Then Sir Bors, Sir Ector, and Sir Lionel called unto them the knights of their blood, and they were nine knights of Sir Launcelot’s kin. And they thrust in mightily, for they were all noble knights. And so they came hurtling together, and smote down many knights of Northgalis and of Northumberland.

And when Sir Launcelot saw them charge so, he gat his spear in his hand ; and there encountered with him all at once Sir Bors, Sir Ector, and Sir Lionel and they smote Sir Launcelot’s horse to the earth ; and by misfortune, Sir Bors smote Sir

Launcelot through the shield into the side, and the spear brake, and the head was left in his side.

Now when Sir Lavaine saw his master lie on the ground, he ran to the King of Scots and smote him to the earth; and by great force he took his horse and brought him to Sir Launcelot and maugre of them all he made him mount upon that horse. And then Sir Launcelot gat a spear in his hand, and there he smote Sir Bors, horse and man, to the earth. In the same wise he served Sir Ector and Sir Lionel. And Sir Lavaine smote down Sir Blamore. And then Sir Launcelot drew his sword, for he felt himself so sorely hurt, that he thought there to have had his death.

By this time Sir Bors was horsed and he came with Sir Ector and Sir Lionel, and all three smote with swords upon Sir Launcelot's helmet. And when he felt their buffets, and his grievous wound, he thought to do what he might while he still endured. And then he gave Sir Bors such a buffet that he made him bow his head passing low and in the same wise served he Sir Ector and Sir Lionel. And therewith he pulled off their helmets, and so might have slain them, but as the book saith, when he saw their visages, his heart failed him, and he left them there.

And then afterward, he hurled into the thickest of the press and did there the most marvellous deeds of arms that ever man saw or heard speak of. And ever Sir Lavaine, the good knight,

was with him. And that day, Sir Launcelot smote down, and pulled down, more than thirty knights; and the most part were of the Table Round. And Sir Lavaine did full well that day, for he smote down ten knights of the Table Round.

CHAPTER III

HOW LAUNCELOT WAS TAKEN TO THE HERMIT SIR BAUDWIN

AND then the king blew unto lodging, and the prize was given by the herald unto the knight with the white shield that bare the red sleeve.

Then came the King with the Hundred Knights, the King of Northgalis, and the King of Northumberland, and said unto Sir Launcelot, “Fair knight, God bless thee; for much have you done this day for us. Therefore we pray you come with us that you may receive the honour and the prize you have so well deserved.”

“My fair lords,” said Sir Launcelot, “wit you well, if I have deserved thanks, I have bought it sore; for I am like never to escape with my life. Therefore, fair lords, I pray you, suffer me to depart where I please, for I am sore hurt. I care nothing now for honour; for I had rather repose me than to be lord of all the earth.” And therewith he groaned piteously, and rode at a gallop

away from them, until he came to the shelter of a wood.

And when he saw that he was so far from the field that he might not be seen, then he said in a weak voice, "O gentle knight, Sir Lavaine, help me to take this truncheon out of my side ; for it sticketh so sore that it nigh slayeth me."

"O mine own lord," said Sir Lavaine, "I would fain do what might please you, but I fear if I pull out the truncheon, you will be in peril of death."

"I charge you," said Sir Launcelot, "as you love me, draw it out."

And herewith he descended from his horse, and right so did Sir Lavaine ; and forthwith Sir Lavaine drew the truncheon out of his side ; and he gave a great shriek, and a marvellous horrible groan, and so fell to the earth and swooned.

"Alas," said Sir Lavaine, "what shall I do?" And then he turned Sir Launcelot toward the wind, but he lay there half an hour as though he had been dead.

But after a while he opened his eyes and said, "O Lavaine, help me to my horse, for within two miles of this place is a gentle hermit that was sometime a noble knight, and a lord of great possessions. And because of his great goodness he hath taken upon him wilful poverty, and forsaken all his lands. His name is Sir Baudwin of Brittany, and he is a noble surgeon and a good

leech. Now help me to go to him, and perchance he may ease this pain."

So Sir Lavaine helped him upon his horse, and they rode away, and at last, by good fortune, came to the hermitage. Then Sir Lavaine beat upon the gate with the butt of his spear and cried, "Open, for Jesus' sake!"

Then a fair child came and asked them what they wished. Then Sir Lavaine bade him go and pray the hermit to let in a knight that was sore wounded. So the child went in lightly, and anon he brought the hermit, who was a passing good man.

And when the hermit beheld Sir Launcelot, as he sat leaning upon his saddle-bow ever bleeding piteously, he felt great sorrow for him. So he called to him two of his servants, and they bare him into the hermitage, and lightly unarmed him, and laid him in a bed. And then anon the hermit staunched his blood, and made him drink good wine; and soon Sir Launcelot was refreshed and knew himself. For in those days hermits were not as they are nowadays; for there were then no hermits but those who had been men of valour and of prowess; and they had great households, and refreshed people that were in distress.

CHAPTER IV

HOW SIR GAWAINE CAME TO ASTOLAT AND
RECOGNIZED SIR LAUNCELOT'S SHIELD

Now leave we Sir Launcelot at the hermitage, and turn we unto King Arthur. When he knew that the knight that bare the red sleeve had been hurt, he was very heavy, and he said, "Alas, this is the worst tidings that has come to me these seven years!"

And Sir Gawaine said, "By my head, if that good knight be sore hurt, it is great damage and pity to all this land; for he is one of the noblest knights that ever I saw handle a spear or a sword. And if he may be found, I shall find him, for I am sure he is not far from this town."

So Sir Gawaine took a squire with him, and rode all about Camelot within six or seven miles, but he could hear no word of that knight.

Then within two days, King Arthur and all the fellowship returned unto London again. And as they rode, it happened that Sir Gawaine lodged at Astolat with Sir Bernard, as Sir Launcelot had lodged. And so as Sir Gawaine was in his chamber, Sir Bernard and his daughter Elaine came unto him to cheer him, and to ask him who did best at the tournament.

"So God help me," said Gawaine, "there were two knights that bare white shields, but one of

them wore a red sleeve upon his head ; and certainly he was one of the best knights that ever I saw joust in the field. For I dare say that one knight smote down forty knights of the Table Round, and his fellow did right well also."

" Now, blessed be God," said the Fair Maiden of Astolat, " that that knight fared so well ; for he is the man in the world that I first loved, and truly he shall be the last that ever I shall love."

" Now, good maid," said Gawaine, " is that knight your love ? "

" Certainly, sir," said she, " wit you well, he is my love."

" Then, know you his name ? " said Sir Gawaine.

" Nay, truly," said the damsel, " I know not his name nor whence he cometh : "

" How had you knowledge of him first ? " said Sir Gawaine.

Then she told him, as ye have heard before, how her father asked him to take her brother into his service, and how her father lent him her brother's, Sir Tirre's, shield. " And," said she, " here with me he left his own shield."

" For what cause did he this ? " asked Sir Gawaine.

" For this cause," said the damsel, " his shield was too well known among many noble knights."

" Ah, fair damsel," said Sir Gawaine, " if it pleases you, let me have a sight of that shield."

So the shield was brought, and Sir Gawaine took off the case, and when he beheld that shield he knew anon that it was Sir Launcelot's shield. Then was his heart heavier than it was before, and he said to the maiden, "Fair damsel, you love the most honourable knight of the world, but I fear that you will never see him more in this world."

"Alas," said she, "how may this be? Is he slain?"

"I say not so," said Sir Gawaine, "but wit you well he is grievously wounded. And wit you well he is the noble knight, Sir Launcelot, for by this shield I know him."

"Alas," said Elaine, "how may this be, and what was his hurt?"

"Truly," said Sir Gawaine, "the man that loved him best hurt him so."

"Now, fair father," said Elaine, "I beg you give me leave to ride to seek him, or else I wot well I shall go out of my mind; for I shall never rest until I find him and my brother, Sir Lavaxine."

"Do as you please," said her father, "for I also am sorry for the hurt of that noble knight."

And so the maid made ready to depart.

CHAPTER V

OF THE SORROW THAT SIR BORS HAD FOR THE
HURT OF LAUNCELOT

THEN on the morrow Sir Gawaine went to King Arthur and told him how he had found Launcelot's shield in the keeping of the Fair Maiden of Astolat. And then the king and all went on to London, and there Sir Gawaine openly disclosed to all the court that it was Sir Launcelot that jested best.

And when Sir Bors heard that, wit you well he was an heavy man, and so were all his kinsmen. And Sir Bors said, "I will hasten to seek him, and find him wheresoever he be, and God send me good tidings of him."

And so we leave him, and speak we of Sir Launcelot that lay in great peril.

CHAPTER VI

HOW ELAINE FOUND SIR LAUNCELOT

So fair Elaine went to Winchester, and there she sought all about, until by good fortune she met Sir Lavaine riding in the woods. And after she had greeted her brother, she asked him how did my lord, Sir Launcelot. "Who told you, sister, that my lord's name is Sir Launcelot?"

Then she told him how Sir Gawaine knew the shield.

So they rode together till they came to the hermitage, and there Elaine alighted, and Sir Lavaine took her in to Sir Launcelot. And when she saw him lie so sick and pale in his bed, she could not speak; but suddenly she fell to earth in a swoon, and there she lay a great while. And when she was herself again, she said, "My lord, Sir Launcelot, why are you in this plight?" And then she swooned again.

And then Sir Launcelot prayed Sir Lavaine to take her up. "And bring her to me," he said. And when she came to herself again, Sir Launcelot kissed her, and said, "Fair maiden, why fare you thus? You put me in great pain. If you be come to comfort me, you are right welcome; and of this little hurt that I have, I shall soon be whole by the grace of God. But I marvel who told you my name."

Then the fair maiden told him how Sir Gawaine was lodged with her father, and how he had there known Sir Launcelot's shield.

So this maiden never went from Sir Launcelot, but watched him day and night, and took such care of him, that, as the book saith, there was never woman did more for man than she.

Then Sir Launcelot begged Sir Lavaine to keep watch for Sir Bors in Winchester, and told him he should know him by a wound in

his forehead. "For well I am sure," said Sir Launcelot, "that Sir Bors will seek me, for he is the same good knight that hurt me."

CHAPTER VII

HOW SIR BORS FOUND SIR LAUNCELOT, AND HOW THEY DEPARTED AND WENT TO ASTOLAT

Now turn we unto Sir Bors that came unto Winchester to seek after his cousin Sir Launcelot. Now Sir Lavaine had made men to lie in watch for such a man; and so when he came to Winchester, Sir Lavaine had warning of his coming. And so Sir Lavaine went to Winchester and found Sir Bors. And then they departed and came to the hermitage where Sir Launcelot was.

And when Sir Bors saw Sir Launcelot lie in his bed so pale and weak, he felt great pity, and wept tenderly a great while. And when he could speak, he made great lament for the hurt he had given Sir Launcelot, and begged his mercy.

But Sir Launcelot bade him welcome, and told him that it was his own foolish pride that was at fault. "For," said he, "I would in my pride have overcome you all; and so I was near slain. And that is my own fault, for I might have given you warning of my being there. Therefore, fair cousin, let us leave off this matter and speak of some rejoicing."

Then Sir Bors leaned upon his bedside and told Sir Launcelot of the sorrow the king had because of Sir Launcelot's hurt. And then Sir Bors told him how Sir Gawaine had discovered him by the shield he had left with the Fair Maiden of Astolat.

"And is this she whom men call the Fair Maiden of Astolat that is so busy about you?" asked Sir Bors.

"She it is," said Sir Launcelot, "and I can by no means put her from me."

"Why should you put her from you?" asked Sir Bors. "She is a passing fair damsel and well-taught. I would, fair cousin, that you could love her! I see well by her diligence about you that she loveth you well."

"That I regret," said Sir Launcelot.

"But, sir," said Sir Bors, "she is not the first that hath lost her love upon you, and that is the more pity."

And so they talked of many more things, and within a short while Sir Launcelot grew big and strong again. So then they made them ready to depart from the hermit. And on a morning they took their horses, and Elaine with them. And when they came to Astolat, there were they well lodged, and had great cheer of Sir Bernard, the old baron, and Sir Tirre, his son.

CHAPTER VIII

OF THE LAMENTATION OF THE FAIR MAID OF ASTOLAT WHEN LAUNCELOT WOULD DEPART

AND then on the morrow when Sir Launcelot would depart, fair Elaine called her father to her, and her brothers, Sir Lavaine and Sir Tirre, and thus she said : " My lord, Sir Launcelot, now I see you will depart. Now fair knight and courteous knight, have mercy upon me, and suffer me not to die for thy love."

" What would you that I did ? " said Sir Launcelot.

" I would have you for my husband," said Elaine.

" Fair damsel, I thank you," said Sir Launcelot, " but truly, I mean never to be wedded man."

" Alas," said Elaine, " then must I die for your love."

" You shall not do so," said Sir Launcelot, " but because you love me as you say you do, whenever you bestow your love upon some good knight that will wed you, I will give you together a thousand pounds yearly. This will I do, fair maiden, for your kindness, and always, while I live, I will be your own true knight."

" Of all this," said the maiden, " I will have none ; and unless you will wed me, my good days are done."

“ Fair damsel,” said Sir Launcelot, “ of this you must pardon me.”

Then she shrieked shrilly, and fell down in a swoon; and then her women bare her into her chamber where she made much sorrow. And though Sir Launcelot felt great sorrow for the gentle maid, he did not love her and could not gainsay what he had said. So in heavy distress he made ready to depart, and Sir Lavaine the good knight went with him.

So they travelled until they came to Winchester. And when Arthur wist that Sir Launcelot was come again whole and sound, the king made great joy of him and so did Sir Gawaine and all the knights of the Round Table, except Sir Aggravaine and Sir Mordred. But they had evil in their hearts against Sir Launcelot, and so would not rejoice over his return.

CHAPTER IX

OF THE DEATH OF ELAINE

Now speak we of the Fair Maiden of Astolat that sorrowed so greatly day and night over Sir Launcelot’s departing, that she never slept, ate, nor drank. So when she had grieved thus for ten days, she became so feeble that she must needs pass out of this world.

So then she sent for her ghostly father, and

confessed all her love and sorrow for Launcelot. And he bade her leave such thoughts; but she said, "Why should I leave such thoughts? Am not I an earthly woman? And while the breath is in my body, I will speak of my lord, Sir Launce lot; for my belief is, I do no offence though I love an earthly man. And I take God to witness, I never loved any but Sir Launcelot du Lake; and since it is the will of God that I shall die for the love of so noble a knight, I beseech the high Father of Heaven to have mercy upon my soul, and to let the innumerable pains I have suffered be expiation of part of my sins. For, sweet Lord Jesus, I was never great offender against Thy laws, except that I loved this noble knight out of measure, and of myself, good Lord, I could not withstand this fervent love whereof I die."

And then she called her father Sir Bernard, and her brother Sir Tirre, and fervently she prayed her father that her brother might write such a letter as she should dictate; and so her father granted her. And when the letter was written word by word as she devised, then she prayed her father that she might be watched until she was dead. "And," said she, "while my body is still warm, let this letter be put in my right hand and bound fast; and let me be put in a fair bed with all the richest clothes that I have about me; and then take me in a chariot unto the next place where the Thames is; and there

let me be put within a barge, and let the barge be covered with black samite over and over; and then send but one man with me such as you may trust to steer me thither. So, father, I beseech you let it be done."

So her father promised faithfully that all should be done as she had devised. Then her father and her brother made great dole, for when this was done anon she died.

And so when she was dead, the corpse and the bed were taken unto the Thames and there put into a barge with one trusted old man. And he steered the barge unto Westminster, and there he rowed a great while to and fro before any espied it.

CHAPTER X

HOW THE CORPSE OF THE MAID OF ASTOLAT ARRIVED BEFORE KING ARTHUR, AND HOW SIR LAUNCELOT OFFERED THE MASS-PENNY

Now it happened that King Arthur and Queen Guenever were speaking together at a window, and so as they looked out upon the Thames they espied this black barge, and much they marvelled what it meant. Then the king called Sir Kay and showed it to him, and said, "Go thither, and bring me word what is there."

Then Sir Kay departed and came to the barge

and went in. And there he found the fairest corpse lying in a rich bed, and a poor man sitting at the end, who would speak no word. So Sir Kay returned unto the king, and told him what he had found.

“That fair corpse will I see,” said the king.

So he took the queen by the hand, and went thither.

Then the king and queen entered the barge, and there they found the fairest woman lying in a rich bed, covered with many rich clothes all of cloth and gold, and she lay as though she smiled. Then, of a sudden, the queen espied the letter in her right hand, and told it to the king. So the king took it, and said, “Now I am sure this letter will tell what she was, and where she is come thither.”

So then the king and the queen went out of the barge; and when they were come within their chamber, the king called many knights about him, and brake the letter, and made a clerk to read it. And this was the intent of the letter: —

“Most noble knight, Sir Launcelot, I, that men called the Fair Maiden of Astolat, was your lover, and for your love I have died. Therefore, unto all ladies I make moan. Yet pray for my soul, and bury me at least; and offer you my mass-penny; this is my last request. And a pure maiden I died, I take God to witness. Pray for my soul, Sir Launcelot, as thou art peerless.”

This was all the substance of the letter. And when it was read, the king and the queen and all the knights wept for pity. Then was Sir Launcelot sent for; and when he was come, King Arthur made the letter to be read to him. And when Sir Launcelot heard it word by word, he said :—

“ My lord Arthur, wit you well, my heart is very heavy over the death of this damsel. God knows I was never willingly the cause of her death. I will not say but that she was both fair and good, and much was I beholden unto her, but she loved me out of measure.”

“ You might have shown her,” said the queen, “ some bounty and gentleness, and so have preserved her life.”

“ Madam,” said Sir Launcelot, “ she wished only to be my wife, and this I could not grant her. But I proffered her, for the good love she showed me, a thousand pounds yearly to her and her heirs, whenever she should wed any knight that she could find to love. For, madam, I love not to be constrained to love; for love must arise from the heart, and not by any constraint.”

“ That is true,” said the king, “ but it will be your duty to see that she be interred honourably.”

“ Sir,” said Sir Launcelot, “ that shall be done as I can best devise.”

And so many knights rode thither to behold that fair maiden. And so upon the morrow she was interred richly, and Sir Launcelot offered her

mass-penny ; and all the knights of the Round Table that were there at that time offered with Sir Launcelot. And then the poor man returned the way he had come with the barge.

And so here endeth the tale of that Fair Maiden of Astolat, that died of the great love she bore Sir Launcelot du Lake.

BOOK V

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR AND LAUNCELOT

CHAPTER I

WHICH TELLETH OF THE PLOT TO ACCUSE QUEEN GUENEVER AND SIR LAUNCELOT OF TREASON

IN May, when every lusty heart flourishes, and the season is comfortable to behold, then man and woman rejoice in the coming of summer with all her fresh flowers; for winter with his rough winds and blasts causes even a lusty man and woman to cower, and to sit fast by the fire. But in this month of May there befell a great trouble that never ceased until the flower of chivalry of all the world was destroyed and slain. And all was because of two unhappy knights, who were named Agravaine and Mordred, that were brethren unto Sir Gawaine. For this Sir Agravaine and Sir Mordred had ever a secret hatred for the queen, Dame Guenever, and Sir Launcelot. And they noised it about the court that Sir Launcelot loved the queen, and that the queen was faithless to Arthur. And ever they kept a watch upon Sir Launcelot to prove this.

So it chanced by ill fortune that Sir Gawaine

and all his brethren were in King Arthur's chamber, and Sir Agravaine said openly, so that many knights might hear it, "I marvel that we all are not ashamed to suffer so noble a king as Arthur to be so shamed by the love of Launcelot for the queen, and his faithlessness to the king."

Then spake Sir Gawaine, "Brother Sir Agravaine, I pray you and charge you, speak no more of such matters before me; for wit you well, I have no part in them."

"So God help me," said Sir Gareth and Sir Gaheris, "we do not wish to know, brother Agravaine, of your deeds."

"Then will I listen," said Sir Mordred.

"I can well believe that," said Sir Gawaine, "for you were ever ready to listen unto all mischief. But I would that you would put aside all this; for I know what will befall of it."

"Befall what may," said Sir Agravaine, "I will disclose it to the king."

"Not by my counsel," said Sir Gawaine, "for wit you well, if war should arise between Sir Launcelot and us, there will many kings and great lords hold with Sir Launcelot. Also, brother Sir Agravaine, you must remember how often Sir Launcelot hath rescued the king and the queen. And the best of us all would have been cold at the heart-root had not Sir Launcelot been better than we, and that hath he proved himself full oft."

“And for my part, I will never be against Sir Launcelot, because of one day’s deed,—to wit, he rescued me from King Carados of the Dolorous Tower, and slew him and saved my life. Also, brother Sir Agravaine and Sir Mordred, in like manner Sir Launcelot rescued you both, and threescore and two others from Sir Turquine. Methinks, brother, such deeds and kindness should be remembered.”

“Do as you like,” said Sir Agravaine, “but I will not keep quiet any longer.”

And just as he spoke these words, in came King Arthur.

“Now, brother, stint your noise,” said Sir Gawaine.

“We will not,” said Sir Agravaine and Sir Mordred.

“Will you not?” said Sir Gawaine; “then God speed you, for I will not hear your tales.”

“No more will I,” said Sir Gareth and Sir Gaheris.

“I will never say evil of that man,” said Sir Gareth, “for Sir Launcelot made me knight.”

And therewith they three departed, making great dole. “Alas,” said they, “now is this realm wholly mischieved, and the noble fellowship of the Round Table will be scattered !”

CHAPTER II

HOW KING ARTHUR WAS MADE TO BELIEVE
THAT LAUNCELOT WAS A FALSE KNIGHT

AND then when King Arthur came unto them, he asked them why they made such noise.

“ My lord,” said Agravaine, “ I will tell you what I may keep no longer.” And therewith he made known to the king all that he believed of Sir Launcelot. Now the king was loath to hear any ill report of Sir Launcelot, for Sir Launcelot had done so much for him and the queen so many times that the king loved him passingly well.

But these two knights, Sir Mordred and Sir Agravaine, because of the hatred they bore the queen and Sir Launcelot, had their plans well laid, and so by their evil contrivings was the king finally made to believe that Launcelot was a false knight, and no longer worthy to sit at the Table Round. And then the king’s heart almost broke, for well he knew that great trouble was come upon his kingdom.

Then Sir Mordred and Sir Agravaine went unto Sir Launcelot with twelve other knights, and called him “ Traitor-knight,” and bade him come forth and defend himself. And he bade them leave their noise, and depart and leave him in peace; and when they would not, he strode in

amongst them, and anon at the first buffet, he slew Sir Agravaine. And twelve of his fellows afterward, he laid cold to the earth; for none of the twelve could withstand Sir Launcelot one buffet. Also, Sir Launcelot wounded Sir Mordred, and he fled with all his might.

And when he was escaped from the noble knight Sir Launcelot, he got his horse and mounted upon him, and rode unto King Arthur, sore wounded and bleeding. And there he told the king how all his fellows were slain, save himself.

“Jesu mercy,” said the king, “he is a marvellous knight of prowess. Alas! it grieves me sore that ever Sir Launcelot should be against me. Now am I sure that the noble fellowship of the Round Table is broken for ever, for with him will many a knight hold.”

CHAPTER III

HOW LAUNCELOT KILLED SIR GARETH AND SIR GAHERIS, AND OF THE KING'S SORROW AND LAMENTATION

AND after that battle, other battles were made upon Sir Launcelot, and in one of these by ill fortune, Sir Launcelot slew the two younger brothers of Sir Gawaine,—Sir Gareth and Sir Gaheris. Then was Launcelot wonderfully sad, for

he had made them knights, and he loved them as his own sons. And many other good knights were slain, and when Arthur was told of the death of his noble knights, and in especial of the death of Sir Gareth, and Sir Gaheris, he swooned for pure sorrow.

“Alas,” he cried, “that ever I bare crown upon my head! Now have I lost the fairest fellowship of noble knights that ever held Christian king together. Within a few days I have lost many knights, and also the noble fellowship of Sir Launcelot and his blood. Alas, that ever this war began! And I charge you that no man tell Sir Gawaine of the death of his two brethren; for I am sure when he hears of it, he will go nigh out of his mind. Merciful Jesu, why slew he Sir Gareth and Sir Gaheris? I dare say that Sir Gareth loved Launcelot above all earthly men.”

“That is truth,” said some of the knights, “but they were slain in the hurtling as Sir Launcelot threw himself in the thick of the press. They were unarmed and he smote them and wist not whom he smote; and so, unhappily, they were slain.”

“The death of them,” said Arthur, “will cause the greatest mortal war that ever was. For when Sir Gawaine knows that Sir Gareth is dead, he will never rest until I have destroyed Sir Launcelot and all his kin. Wit you well, my heart was never so heavy as it is now. Ah, Agravaine,

Agravaine, Jesus forgive thee and thy brother Sir Mordred for the evil will thou hadst against Sir Launcelot; for it hath caused all this sorrow."

CHAPTER IV

OF THE GRIEF OF SIR GAWAINE OVER HIS BROTHERS' DEATH

THEN Sir Gawaine came, and he asked, "Where are my brethren? I hear not of them."

"Truly," said a man, "Sir Gareth and Sir Gheris are slain."

"Jesu defend," said Sir Gawaine; "for all the world, I would not have them slain, especially my good brother Sir Gareth."

"Sir," said the man, "he is slain; and it is a great pity."

"Who slew him?" asked Sir Gawaine.

"Sir," said the man, "Sir Launcelot slew them both."

"That may I not believe," said Sir Gawaine. "My brother Gareth loved him better than me, and all his brethren, and the king. Therefore I may never believe that Sir Launcelot slew my brother."

"Nevertheless," said the man, "it is noised that he slew him."

"Alas," said Sir Gawaine, "now is my joy gone." And then he swore a great oath to be

revenged upon Sir Launcelot, and never to rest until the one or the other had been killed.

Then went he unto Sir Launcelot, and demanded of him, "Thou false and recreant knight, what cause hadst thou to slay my good brother Sir Gareth, that loved thee more than all my kin? Alas, thou madest him knight with thine own hands; why slew thou him that loved thee so well?"

"To excuse myself helps not," said Sir Launcelot, "but by the faith that I owe to the high order of knighthood, I should with as good will have slain my nephew Sir Bors. Alas, that ever I was so unhappy that I had not seen Sir Gareth and Sir Gaheris."

"Thou liest, recreant knight," said Sir Gawaine, "you slew him to spite me. Therefore, wit you well, while I live I shall make war upon you."

CHAPTER V

HOW THEY DID BATTLE, AND HOW SIR LAUNCELOT SPARED ARTHUR'S LIFE

AND then they departed from each other, and both parties made ready to do battle on the morrow. And great preparation was made on both sides. Sir Gawaine called many knights to attack Sir Launcelot and slay him. And Arthur called together three great hosts, and in the morning at

sunrise they were ready in the field. Now when Sir Launcelot's cousins and kinsmen knew that Arthur and Sir Gawaine would make war upon him, they gathered from many quarters. And so in the morning his whole fellowship came out at three gates, in full array ; and Sir Lionel came foremost, and Sir Launcelot came in the middle, and Sir Bors came out at the third gate. Thus they came in order, a full noble array of knights. But always Sir Launcelot charged all his knights in any case to save King Arthur and Sir Gawaine, and not to do them harm.

Then when all these knights were gathered in the field there began a terrible battle, and many people were slain. But ever Sir Launcelot did what he could to save the people in King Arthur's party. But always King Arthur was nigh about Sir Launcelot to have him slain, and Sir Launcelot suffered him to strike, and would not strike back.

And once Sir Bors encountered King Arthur, and smote him down, and would have slain him, but Sir Launcelot said, "Nay do not so, upon pain of thy head. Touch him no more ; for I will never see that most noble king that made me knight either slain or shamed."

And therewith Sir Launcelot alighted off his horse and took up the king, and horsed him again and said thus, "My lord Arthur, for God's love stop this strife, for you get here no worship. I

would do mine uttermost against you, but always I forbear because of the love I bear you. But neither you nor yours forbear to seek to harm me. My lord, remember what I have done in many places. And now am I evil rewarded."

Then the king looked upon Sir Launcelot, and the tears burst from his eyes as he thought of all the great courtesy that was in Sir Launcelot more than in any other man. And therewith the king turned and rode away, for he was no longer able to behold him, and said, "Alas, that ever this war began!"

CHAPTER VI

HOW THE KING WAS ACCORDED WITH THE QUEEN, BUT SIR GAWAINE REFUSED TO ACCORD WITH SIR LAUNCELOT, OR TO LET KING ARTHUR

AND on the morrow they were all ready to do battle again, and there was much slaughter on both sides. And the news of this war was noised through all Christendom, and at last it was noised before the Pope. And he, considering the great goodness of King Arthur and Sir Launcelot, who were called the noblest knights of the world, called unto him a noble clerk—the French book saith it was the Bishop of Rochester—and the Pope gave him bulls to take unto King Arthur

charging him to restore Guenever to favour and to accord with Sir Launcelot.

So when the bishop was come to Carlisle he showed the king these bulls. And when the king understood these bulls he wist not what to do. Full fain would he have been accorded with Sir Launcelot, but Sir Gawaine would not suffer him to ; but as for the queen, he was thereto agreed. So the bishop called Sir Launcelot before the king and his court and showed the bulls the Pope had sent to Arthur. And Sir Launcelot spoke thus :—

“ My good lord, you must understand that I and mine have done you oft better service than any other knights have done in divers places. And when you have been hard beset divers times, I have myself rescued you from many dangers ; and ever, to the extent of my power, I was glad to please you and my lord Sir Gawaine, and many more of your knights in divers places. And I dare aver that ye all wit that I have never yet been over-hard with any manner of knight ; howbeit, I have been matched with many good knights. And I take God to record that I was never wroth or very hard with any good knight if I saw him busy about to win worship ; and glad was I whenever I found any knight that might withstand me on horseback or on foot. Howbeit, Sir Carados of the Dolorous Tower was a noble knight and a strong man, as you know well, my lord Sir Gawaine ; for he might well be called a noble

knight when he by fine force pulled you out of your saddle, and bound you before him athwart his saddle-bow; and there, my lord Sir Gawaine, I rescued you, and slew him before your sight. Also, I rescued your brother Sir Gaheris and slew that Turquine, and delivered three-score-and-four of my lord Arthur's knights out of his prison, Sir Gawaine. Methinketh you ought, of right, to remember this. For if I might have your good will, I would trust God to have my lord Arthur's good grace."

"The king may do as he will," said Sir Gawaine, "but wit you well, you and I shall never be accorded while we live; for thou hast slain three of my brothers; two of them you slew traitorously and pitilessly, for they never bore arms against you, nor none would bear."

"God would they had been armed," said Sir Launcelot, "for then had they been alive. Wit you well, Sir Gawaine, I love none of my kinsmen so well as I loved Sir Gareth; and while I live I shall bitterly bewail his death, not for the great fear I have for you, but many causes cause me to be sorrowful. One is, I made him knight; another is, I wot well he loved me above all other knights; and the third is, he was passing noble, true, courteous, and gentle, and well-conditioned; the fourth is, I wist well that everlasting war would exist between us; and also I wist well that you would cause my noble lord Arthur for

ever to be my mortal foe. And as Jesus is my help, I never slew Sir Gareth, nor Sir Gaheris, by my will. But this I offer: if it may please the king's good grace and you, Sir Gawaine, I will first begin at Sandwich, and from there I will go in my shirt, barefoot, and at every ten miles' end I will found and have made a house of religion, of whatever order ye shall say, with an whole convent, to sing and read, day and night, in especial for Sir Gareth's sake and Sir Gaheris. And this shall I perform from Sandwich unto Carlisle; and every house shall have sufficient livelihood; they shall be furnished and garnished in all things as an holy place ought to be, I promise you faithfully. And this, Sir Gawaine, methinks were fairer and holier, and better for their souls, than for you, most noble king, and you, Sir Gawaine, to make war upon me; for thereby shall you get no return."

Then all knights and ladies that were there wept as though they were mad, and the tears fell on King Arthur's cheeks. But Sir Gawaine's heart was hard and he refused to accord with Sir Launcelot. And because the Pope had forbidden them to fight longer in England, he bade Sir Launcelot make ready to depart from the kingdom within fifteen days.

CHAPTER VII

HOW LAUNCELOT AND HIS FELLOWSHIP DEPARTED FROM ENGLAND

So then Sir Launcelot withdrew from Arthur's court to his own castle at Joyous Gard, where he called his fellowship unto him, and told them how he must leave that most noble Christian realm, and asked them what they would do. Then they answered all together with one voice that they would do as he did. And fully an hundred knights departed with Sir Launcelot, and they all vowed never to leave him for weal or for woe.

And so they shipped at Cardiff and sailed unto Benwick, and thither, ere long, King Arthur and Sir Gawaine, with a great host, followed them. And King Arthur's host did many battles against Sir Launcelot, and there was much slaughter on both sides. And at last Sir Gawaine was sore wounded. But never would he accord with Sir Launcelot, but ever called him traitor knight, and swore to do battle with him until one of them should be slain. But then when he was well recovered and ready to do battle again within three days, there came tidings from England that made King Arthur and all his hosts remove.

CHAPTER VIII

OF SIR MORDRED'S PREPARATIONS TO FIGHT
KING ARTHUR

Now when King Arthur left England to make war upon Sir Launcelot in France, he appointed his son Sir Mordred, ruler of all England.

You have already heard how Sir Mordred was a wicked knight; so as soon as he became ruler, he wrote letters as though they came from beyond the sea, and the letters specified that King Arthur was slain in battle with Sir Launcelot. Wherefore Sir Mordred made a parliament, and called the lords together, and then he made them choose him king. And so he was crowned at Canterbury and held a feast there fifteen days, and afterward he withdrew unto Winchester.

Then a little later came word to Sir Mordred that King Arthur had raised the siege of Sir Launcelot, and was coming homeward with a great host to be avenged upon Sir Mordred. Wherefore, Sir Mordred sent letters to all the barony of this land, and many people drew near unto him. For then the common feeling among them was that with Arthur there was nothing but war and strife, while with Sir Mordred all was joy and bliss. Thus did they disparage Arthur and say evil of him. And many there were that King Arthur had raised from low degree, and given lands to,

who had no good word to say for him now. So, all ye Englishmen, see you not what a mischief there was here! For he that was the most king and knight of the world, and most loved the fellowship of noble knights, and most upheld them, received now from these Englishmen no good word. Alas, this is a great default of us Englishmen, for nothing pleases us for any long time. And so the people at that time were better pleased with Sir Mordred than they were with King Arthur. And many people drew unto Sir Mordred, and said they would abide with him for better or for worse. And so Sir Mordred went with a great host to Dover, where, he had heard say, King Arthur would arrive. He thought to beat his own father from his lands, and the most part of all England held with him, the people were so new-faugh.

CHAPTER IX

OF THE RETURN OF ARTHUR TO ENGLAND, AND OF SIR GAWAINE'S DEATH

AND so after Sir Mordred arrived at Dover with his host, King Arthur came with a great navy of ships and galleys. And there was Sir Mordred waiting to prevent his own father from landing upon the land that he was king over. Then was there launching of great boats and small, full of

noble men of arms; and there was much slaughter of noble knights, and many a bold baron was laid low on both sides. But King Arthur was so courageous that there might no knight stand against him, and his knights fiercely followed him. And so they landed maugre Sir Mordred and all his people, and put Sir Mordred so aback that he fled with all his people.

Then when this was done, King Arthur had buried all his people that were dead. And then was the noble Sir Gawaine found in a great boat, lying half dead. When King Arthur wist that Sir Gawaine was laid so low he went unto him, and he made great sorrow and took Sir Gawaine in his arms, and wept over him, and said:—

“Alas, Sir Gawaine, my sister’s son, here now thou liest, the man in the world that I loved most. Now, is my joy gone, and, my nephew Sir Gawaine, will I disclose to you my heart. In Sir Launcelot and you, I most had my joy and my affiance, and now have I lost my joy of you both. Wherefore all my earthly joy is gone from me.”

“Mine uncle King Arthur,” said Sir Gawaine, “wit you well my death day is come; and all through my own hastiness and wilfulness. I am smitten on the old wound which Sir Launcelot gave me, and I feel sure I must die. Had Sir Launcelot been with you as he was, this unhappy war had never begun. And of all this, I am the

causer; for Sir Launcelot and his blood, through their prowess, held all your cankered enemies in subjection. And now you will miss Sir Launcelot. Alas, I would not accord with him! Therefore, I pray you, fair uncle, that I may have paper, pen and ink, that I may write to Sir Launcelot a note with my own hand."

And then when paper and ink were brought, Gawaine was lifted up by King Arthur, and wrote thus:—

“Unto Launcelot, flower of all noble knights that ever I heard of or saw in my days, I, Sir Gawaine, King Lot’s son of Orkney, sister’s son of the noble King Arthur, send thee greeting, and let thee have knowledge that the tenth day of May I was smitten upon the old wound that thou gavest me at Benwick, and through that same wound I am come to my death to-day. And I wish all the world to know that I, Sir Gawaine, knight of the Table Round, sought my death, and that it was none of thy seeking. Wherefore, I beseech thee, Sir Launcelot, to return again unto this realm, and see my tomb, and pray some prayer for my soul. Also, Sir Launcelot, I beseech you by all the love that was between us, not to tarry, but to come over the sea in all haste, that you may with your noble knights rescue the noble king who made you knight. For he is sore-pressed by a false traitor, Sir Mordred, who has had himself crowned king. So I pray you, most

famous knight of the world, to come at once, and to see my tomb and pray for my soul."

And then Sir Gawaine wept, and prayed the king to send for Sir Launcelot and to cherish him above all other knights. And then at the hour of noon, Sir Gawaine yielded up the spirit, and the king had his body interred in a chapel within Dover Castle. And there yet all men may see the skull of him, and the same wound that Sir Launcelot gave him.

CHAPTER X

HOW SIR GAWAINE'S GHOST APPEARED TO KING ARTHUR AND WARNED HIM NOT TO FIGHT THAT DAY

THEN the people began to draw unto Arthur, and to say that Sir Mordred was wrong to make such war upon Arthur. And King Arthur drew his host westward to the seaside toward Salisbury; and the Monday after Trinity Sunday was set as the day when he should meet Sir Mordred.

Now upon Trinity Sunday, at night, King Arthur dreamed a wonderful dream and it was this: It seemed to him that he sat upon a platform in a chair, and he was dressed in the richest cloth of gold that could be made; and the chair was fastened to a wheel; and the king thought that there was under him, far from him, an hide-

ous, deep, black water, and therein were all manner of serpents, and worms, and wild beasts, foul and horrible ; and suddenly the king thought the wheel turned upside down, and he fell among the serpents ; and the beasts took him by the limbs ; and then the king cried out, “ Help ! ” And knights, squires, and yeomen came to him and awaked him ; and he was so amazed that he wist not where he was.

And then he fell a-slumbering again, and he dreamed another dream. And this time it seemed to the king verily that Sir Gawaine with a number of fair ladies came unto the king. And when King Arthur saw him, he said, “ Welcome, my sister’s son, I thought thou wert dead, and now I see thee alive, much do I bless Almighty Jesus. But fair nephew, who are these ladies who are come with you ? ”

“ Sir,” said Sir Gawaine, “ these are the ladies for whom I fought when I was living, and did battle for in righteous quarrel. And at their great prayer, because I did fight for them have they grace to bring me hither unto you to warn you of your death. For if you fight to-morrow with Sir Mordred, as you have both designed, doubt not that you must be slain, and most of the people on both sides. And out of pity for you and the many other good men that shall be slain, God, of His especial grace, hath sent me to you to give you warning that in no wise are you

to do battle to-morrow, but make a treaty for a month from that day. For within a month, Sir Launcelot with his noble knights shall come and rescue you and slay Sir Mordred and all that hold with him." Then Sir Gawaine and all the ladies vanished.

And anon the king called unto him his knights and squires and yeomen and bade them fetch his noble lords and bishops unto him. And when they were come the king told them his vision, and how Sir Gawaine had warned him that if he fought on the morrow he should be slain. And he commanded Sir Lucan the butler, and his brother Sir Bedivere, to take two bishops with them and go to Mordred and make a treaty with him to delay the battle until a month from that day. He bade them spare neither land nor goods, but to offer whatever they thought best.

So they departed and went to Sir Mordred where he had a grim host of an hundred thousand men. And they entreated Sir Mordred a long time before he would consent to have the battle put off. But at last he agreed, when they promised him Cornwall and Kent during Arthur's days, and, after Arthur's death, all England.

CHAPTER XI

HOW BY MISADVENTURE THE BATTLE BEGAN,
WHERE MORDRED WAS SLAIN, AND KING AR-
THUR HURT TO DEATH

THEN the messengers condescended to let Sir Mordred meet King Arthur between their hosts, and they agreed that each should be accompanied by fourteen persons; and they came with this word unto Arthur. Then said he, "I am glad that this is done." Then he went into the field, but before he departed, he warned all his host that if they should see any sword drawn, "Look ye come on fiercely, and slay that traitor Sir Mordred, for I in no wise trust him." And in the same manner Sir Mordred warned his host, "If you see any sword drawn, look that you come on fiercely, and slay all that stand before you, for I in no wise trust this treaty; I know well my father will be avenged on me."

So they met according to this appointment, and they were agreed upon the terms of the treaty; and wine was fetched, and they drank. But just at this time, an adder came out of a little heath bush, and it stung a knight on the foot. And when the knight felt the sting, he looked down and saw the adder, and drew his sword to slay it. Now he thought of no other harm; but when the hosts on both parties saw that sword drawn, they

blew trumpets and horns, and shouted grimly. And so both hosts dressed them together.

And King Arthur took his horse and rode to his party, and Sir Mordred did likewise. And never was there seen a more doleful battle in any Christian land. There was rushing and riding, foaming and striking, and many a given word was spoken, and many a deadly stroke given. And always King Arthur rode into the thick of the battle, and did nobly as a noble king should. And many times that day Sir Mordred put King Arthur in great peril, but he was true always, and fainted never. And thus they fought all the long day and never stopped until it was near night, and by that time were there an hundred thousand laid dead upon the cold earth.

Then the king looked about him, and he was aware that of all his host and of all his good knights there were left only two,—Sir Lucan the butler, and his brother Sir Bedivere, and they were sore wounded. Then was the king wroth. “Jesu mercy,” said he, “what has become of all my noble knights? Alas, that ever I should see this doleful day; for now am I come to mine end. But would to God that I wist where were that traitor, Sir Mordred, that hath caused all this mischief.”

And just then was King Arthur ware that Sir Mordred leaned upon his sword near-by among a great heap of dead men. Then said he to Sir Lucan,

“Now give me my spear, for yonder I espy the traitor that hath wrought all this woe.”

But Sir Lucan replied, “Sir, let him be. Remember your night’s dream, and what the spirit of Sir Gawaine told you. God of His great goodness hath preserved you hitherto; therefore, for God’s sake, my lord, leave off. You have won the field, for here we three are alive, and with Sir Mordred none is alive; and if you leave off now this wicked day of destiny is past.”

“Tide me death, betide me life,” said the king, “now that I see him yonder, he shall never escape my hands.”

“God speed you well,” said Sir Bedivere.

Then the king gat his spear in both his hands, and ran toward Sir Mordred, crying, “Traitor, now is thy death-day come.” And when Sir Mordred heard King Arthur, he ran at him with his sword drawn in his hand. And King Arthur smote Sir Mordred under the shield through the body. And when Sir Mordred felt that he had his death-wound, he lifted his sword in both his hands and smote his father Arthur such a blow on the side of the head that the sword pierced the helmet and the brain. And then Sir Mordred fell to the earth stark dead. And the noble Arthur fell in a swoon to the earth, and there he swooned ofttimes. And Sir Lucan and Sir Bedivere lifted him up, and they led him between them to a little chapel not far from the seaside.

And when the king was there he thought him well-eased.

CHAPTER XII

HOW KING ARTHUR COMMANDED BEDIVERE TO CAST HIS SWORD EXCALIBUR INTO THE WATER

BUT then Sir Lucan fell in a swoon, for the noble knight had been sore wounded. And when the king beheld Sir Lucan lying at his feet, foaming at the mouth and with the blood bursting from his wounds, he cried, "Alas, this is a sorrowful sight to see this noble duke so die for my sake, for he would have helped me when he had more need of help than I. Alas, he would not complain, his heart was so set to help me; now Jesu have mercy upon his soul." Then Sir Bedivere wept for the death of his brother.

"Now," said Arthur, "must thou help me, for my time hieth fast. Take thou Excalibur, my good sword, and go with it to yonder waterside; and when thou comest there I charge thee throw my sword into that water, and then come again and tell me what thou seest."

"My lord," said Sir Bedivere, "your commandment shall be done."

So Sir Bedivere departed, and by the way, he beheld that noble sword with the pommel and the haft all set with precious stones; and then he said

to himself, "If I throw this rich sword into the water, no good will come of it, but only harm and loss." So he hid Excalibur under a tree; and then, as soon as he might, he went again unto the king, and said he had been at the water.

"What saw you there?" said the king.

"Sir," he replied, "I saw nothing there but waves and winds."

"That is untruly said," said the king; "therefore go quickly again and, as you love me, spare not, but throw in the sword."

So Bedivere went again, but again he thought it a sin and a shame to throw away that noble sword; so he returned to the king and told him that he had been at the water and done his commandment.

"What saw you there?" said the king.

"Sir, I saw nothing but the waters ripple and the waves lap the shore."

"Ah, traitor, untrue," then said Arthur, "now have you betrayed me twice. Who would have weened that you could, you that have been to me so dear? You are named a noble knight, yet you would betray me for the richness of a sword. But go again, quickly; for your long tarrying puts my life in great jeopardy, for I have taken cold. And if you do not now as I bid you, if ever I am able, I shall slay you with my own hands."

Then Bedivere departed, and took the sword,

and went to the waterside ; and there he bound the girdle about the hilts, and then he threw the sword as far as he could into the water. And there came an arm and hand above the water, and met it, and caught it and so shook it thrice, and then vanished away the hand with the sword in the water. So Sir Bedivere came again to the king, and told him what he saw.

“ Alas,” said the king, “ help me hence, for I fear that I have tarried too long.”

Then Sir Bedivere took the king upon his back and went with him to the waterside. And when they were come there, fast by the bank hove a little barge with many fair ladies in it. Among them all was a queen, and they all had black hoods, and they wept and shrieked when they saw King Arthur.

“ Now, put me into the barge,” said the king. And so Bedivere did softly ; and there received him three queens with great mourning ; and so they set him down, and in one of their laps King Arthur laid his head.

And then that queen said, “ Ah, dear brother, why have you tarried so long from me ? Alas, this wound on your head hath caught over-much cold.”

So then they rowed from the land, and Sir Bedivere beheld all those ladies go from him. Then he cried out, “ Ah, my lord Arthur, what shall become of me now you go from me and leave me here alone among my enemies ? ”

“Comfort thyself,” said the king, “and do as well as thou mayst, for in me is nothing to trust in. I will go into the vale of Avilion to heal me of my grievous wound, and if thou never hear more of me, pray for my soul.” And ever the queens and ladies wept so that it was pitiful to hear them.

CHAPTER XIII

HOW BEDIVERE FOUND HIM ON THE MORROW DEAD, AND HOW HE ABODE THERE WITH THE HERMIT

As soon as Bedivere lost sight of the barge, he wept and wailed. Then he took to the forest, and rode all that night, and in the morning he came to a chapel and an hermitage. Then he was glad and went thither; and when he came into the chapel he saw an hermit lying in the dust and grovelling on all four near-by a new-made tomb. When the hermit saw Sir Bedivere he knew him well; for only a little while before he had been Bishop of Canterbury, whom Sir Mordred had put to flight.

“Sir,” said Bedivere, “what man is there interred that you pray so fast for?”

“Fair sir,” said the hermit, “I know not really. I can only guess. But this night, at midnight, here came a number of ladies, and they brought a corpse and prayed me to bury him. And here

they offered an hundred tapers, and they gave me an hundred gold coins."

"Alas," said Bedivere, "then is it my lord King Arthur that lieth buried here in this chapel."

Then Sir Bedivere swooned, and when he awoke he prayed the hermit that he might abide with him there to live with fasting and prayers. "For from hence will I never go," said Bedivere, "by my will; but all the day of my life will I abide here and pray for my lord Arthur."

"You are welcome to me," said the hermit, "for I know you better than you ween I do. You are bold Bedivere, and Sir Lucan the butler was your brother."

Then Bedivere told the hermit all that you have here read. So there bode Sir Bedivere with the hermit. And Sir Bedivere put upon him poor clothes and served the hermit in lowly spirit with fasting and with prayers.

Thus of Arthur I find nothing more written in authorized books; nor more certainly of his death have I ever read. But thus was he led away in a ship, wherein were three queens; and the ladies brought him to the hermit for burial. And the hermit bore witness that the buried man was King Arthur, but still he knew not certainly that it was the body of King Arthur.

CHAPTER XIV

OF THE OPINION OF SOME MEN OF THE DEATH
OF KING ARTHUR, AND HOW QUEEN GUENE-
VER MADE HER A NUN IN ALMESBURY

YET some men say in many parts of England that King Arthur is not dead, but went by the will of our Lord Jesus Christ into another place; and men say that he shall come again and win the holy cross. I will not say it shall be so; but rather will I say, here in this world he changed his life. But many men say that there is written on his tomb this verse:—

*Hic facet Arthurus, Rex quondam, Rexque futurus.*¹

Thus leave I here Sir Bedivere and the hermit in a chapel beside Glastonbury. And so they lived in their prayers and fasting and great abstinence.

Now, when Queen Guenever understood that King Arthur was slain, and all his noble knights, then the queen took five ladies with her, and so she went to Almesbury. And there she became a nun, and wore white clothes and black; and did as great penance as ever did sinful lady in this land; and never creature could make her merry. But she lived in fasting and prayer and did many deeds of alms; and all manner of people marvelled to see her so changed. And

¹ Here lies Arthur, once king, and king to be.

now leave we Queen Guenever in Almesbury, a nun in white clothes and black, and speak we of Sir Launcelot du Lake.

CHAPTER XV

HOW WHEN SIR LAUNCELOT HEARD OF THE DEATH OF KING ARTHUR HE CAME TO ENGLAND

Now when Sir Launcelot heard how Sir Mordred had made war against King Arthur, his own father, he was very wroth ; and repented him bitterly that ever he had allowed Mordred to escape his hands. And when he received Sir Gawaine's doleful letter he was grieved out of measure. So he made him ready with all haste to take his host and go into England to revenge Gawaine and King Arthur and Queen Guenever.

So he passed over the sea to Dover, and there he landed with seven kings ; and the sight was hideous to behold. Then Sir Launcelot asked the men of Dover what had become of King Arthur. Then the people told him how King Arthur and an hundred thousand others were slain.

“Alas,” said Launcelot, “this is the heaviest tidings that ever came to me. Now, fair sirs, show me the tomb of Gawaine.”

So certain of the people took him into the castle of Dover and showed him the tomb, and

he knelt down and wept and prayed heartily for Gawaine's soul. And he offered the mass-penny as Sir Gawaine had asked him to ; and the seven kings came and offered forty pounds apiece ; and the people sang a requiem ; and Sir Launcelot lay two nights by the tomb in prayer and weeping.

Then called he all his host unto him : "Fair sirs, thank you all for coming into this country with me, but we came too late. Since that is so, I will now ride to seek my lady Queen Guenever, for I hear she hath great pain and much disease. Therefore ye shall abide me here ; but if I come not again in fifteen days, then take your ships and fellowships and depart into your own country."

CHAPTER XVI

HOW LAUNCELOT FOUND QUEEN GUENEVER AT ALMESBURY

So Launcelot departed and rode westerly seven or eight days, and then he came to a nunnery. And Queen Guenever, walking in a cloister, was ware that Launcelot was without. And she bade her ladies bring him to her, and when he was come, she said, "Through this man and me hath all this war been wrought, and the death of the noblest knights of the world. Therefore I am in this plight to get my soul-heal ; and I trust

through God's grace so to live that after my death I may have sight of the blessed face of Christ. Therefore, Sir Launcelot, I beseech thee to see me no more ; but to return to thy kingdom and keep well thy realm from wrack and war."

And Sir Launcelot was bitterly grieved to see the queen so sad and ill, but he promised to bid her good-bye and go to an hermitage there to do penance and to pray and fast while his life lasted. And they bade each other good-bye, and the ladies took the queen to her chamber.

CHAPTER XVII

HOW SIR LAUNCELOT CAME TO THE HERMITAGE WHERE THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY WAS

AND Sir Launcelot went and took his horse and rode all that day and all night in a forest. And then in the morning he came to an hermitage, and there he found the Bishop of Canterbury and Sir Bedivere. And Sir Launcelot kneeled down and prayed the bishop to shrive him, and to let him remain there and be his brother. Then the bishop said, "I will gladly." So he put a habit on Sir Launcelot and he stayed there and served God, day and night, with prayers and fastings.

Now Launcelot's great host abode at Dover, but when he did not return, Sir Lionel took

fifteen lords with him, and rode to London to seek Sir Launcelot. But on the way thither Sir Lionel and many of his lords were slain. Then Sir Bors bade the great host go home, and he with Sir Ector and others of Launcelot's kin rode till by good fortune they came to the chapel where Launcelot was. And when Sir Bors saw Sir Launcelot clothed in that manner, he prayed the bishop that he might put on that suit, too. So a habit was put on him, and there he lived in prayer and fasting. And within half a year others came until there were seven in all noble knights.

And then one night, there came a vision to Sir Launcelot, and it charged him to go in all haste to Almesbury. "For," it said, "there shall you find Queen Guenever dead. So take your fellows with you, and fetch the corpse and bury it beside King Arthur."

Now Sir Launcelot had this vision three times in one night. So he arose before day, and took eight of his fellows with him and went on foot from Glastonbury to Almesbury. And there they found Queen Guenever had died half an hour before.

So Sir Launcelot had the queen placed on a horse-bier, and he and his fellows walked beside her to Glastonbury, and there they buried her, as befitted a queen, beside King Arthur.

CHAPTER XVIII

OF THE PASSING OF LAUNCELOT

AND after that Launcelot ate but little meat; and then he began to sicken, and to dwindle away. And evermore, day and night, he prayed, and grovelled in his grief on the tomb of King Arthur and Queen Guenever. And there was no comfort that the bishop, nor Bors, nor any of his fellows could give him.

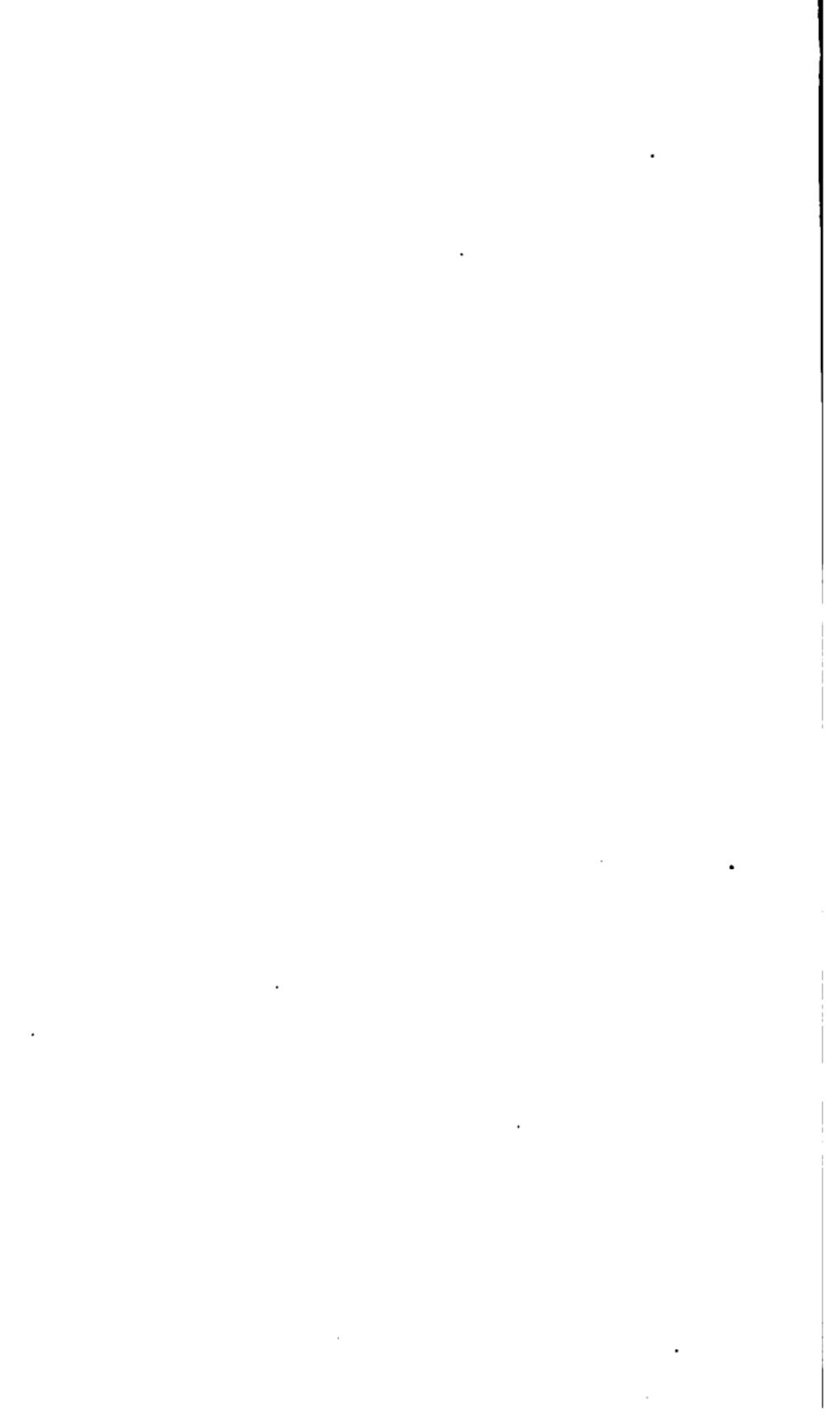
So within six weeks afterward, Sir Launcelot fell very sick. And one night the bishop dreamed that he saw Sir Launcelot with many angels about him, and they bore him up to the gates of heaven and the gates opened to receive him. And then when the bishop told his dream to Sir Bors, they went to Launcelot's bed, and there they found him stark dead. And as he lay there he smiled, and they felt that the sweetest peace had filled his soul.

Then was there weeping and wringing of hands, and in the morning the bishop said his mass of requiem. And the bishop and the knights put his body in the horse-bier and so they carried him to his own beautiful castle, Joyous Gard. And there they buried him, and sang and prayed over him.

And thus was the passing of Launcelot, who was the head of all Christian knights. And he

was the truest friend that ever bestrode a horse,
and the kindest man that ever struck with sword.
And he was the meekest man and the gentlest
that ever ate in hall amongst ladies.

And so here is the end of the book of King
Arthur and his noble knights of the Round
Table.



GLOSSARY

<i>Accord</i> , agree.	<i>Felon</i> , evil.
<i>An</i> , if.	<i>Foining</i> , lunging or thrusting with the sword.
<i>Anon</i> , at once.	<i>For-bled</i> , spent with bleeding.
<i>Apparelled</i> , fitted up.	<i>Foster brother</i> , brother to another by virtue of being reared in the same family, but not of the same parentage.
<i>Bated</i> , abated, lost.	<i>Fulfilled</i> , accomplished.
<i>Befell</i> , happened.	<i>Gat</i> , got, acquired.
<i>Beholden</i> , indebted to.	<i>Ghostly father</i> , a priest.
<i>Besweated</i> , covered with sweat.	<i>Girt</i> , encircle.
<i>Bite</i> , cut.	<i>Grim</i> , fierce, great.
<i>Buffet</i> , blow.	<i>Grimly</i> , ugly.
<i>Burgess</i> , a freeman of a burgh or town.	<i>Hackney</i> , a hired horse.
<i>Candlemas</i> , February 2. So called because the candles used for sacred offices were blessed on that day.	<i>Haft</i> , handle.
<i>Cantels</i> , slices.	<i>Hardiness</i> , fool-hardiness, boldness.
<i>Certes</i> , certainly.	<i>Hardy</i> , daring, fool-hardy.
<i>Chariot</i> , cart.	<i>Harness</i> , armour.
<i>Cheer</i> , entertainment, courage, news.	<i>Hauberk</i> , coat of mail.
<i>Churl</i> , countryman.	<i>Heavy</i> , sad.
<i>Clean</i> , well-born.	<i>Hermit</i> , one who lived in solitude for religious worship.
<i>Commons</i> , common people.	<i>Hermitage</i> , home of hermits.
<i>Courser</i> , a war-horse, fleet and spirited.	<i>Hie</i> , hurry.
<i>Crupper</i> , a part of the horse's harness.	<i>Hight</i> , called, named.
<i>Cumbrance</i> , cumbrance, burden.	<i>Holdeh</i> , protests, holds out.
<i>Dameel</i> , maiden.	<i>Homage</i> , an act by which barons and knights acknowledged the king as master.
<i>Debonair</i> , courteous, gracious.	<i>Hostelry</i> , a house of lodging and entertainment.
<i>Defoul</i> , to tread down.	<i>Hove</i> , waited about.
<i>Despite</i> , harm, act of malice.	<i>Hurtle</i> , dash.
<i>Divers</i> , various.	<i>Jeopard</i> , risk.
<i>Dole</i> , grief.	<i>Joust</i> , a tilt between two knights.
<i>Dress</i> , make ready, direct.	<i>Leech</i> , physician.
<i>Errant</i> , wandering, seeking adventure.	<i>Lightly</i> , quickly, easily.
<i>Essay</i> , try.	<i>Manor</i> , estate belonging to a lord.
<i>Estates</i> , ranks.	<i>Mass-penny</i> , offering at mass for the dead.
<i>Evensong</i> , evening prayer.	
<i>Fealty</i> , oath of fidelity.	
<i>Fellowship</i> , company of knights.	

Matins, morning worship.

Maugre, in spite of.

Minster, church.

Mischieved, hurt.

New-faugh, fickle.

Nill, not.

Noblesse, nobleness.

Over-governed, ruled over.

Palfrey, { a saddle-horse as distin-
guished from a war-horse;
a woman's saddle-horse.

Passing, surpassing.

Pavilion, tent.

Pentecost, the fiftieth day, and the
seventh Sunday, after Easter.
Called also Whitsunday.

Peradventure, perhaps.

Pommel, the knob on the hilt of the
sword.

Portcullis, a grating of iron, or of
timber pointed with iron, over the
gateway of a fortress or castle, to
be let down to prevent the en-
trance of an enemy.

Postern, a back door or gate.

Prime, 6 A. M.

Priory, a religious house, next in
dignity to an abbey, presided over
by a prior or prioress.

Privy, private.

Prowess, strength.

Recluse, a religious devotee living
in seclusion.

Recreant, defeated, overcome.

Rightwise, rightfully.

Rove, cleft.

Samite, a cloth like satin, with
glistening silver and gold threads.

Scripture, writing, inscription.

Search, probe.

Seneschal, a steward, a major-domo.

Shrive, to receive the confession of
and to absolve from sin.

Siege, seat.

Sooth, truth.

Speed, succeed.

Stint, stop.

Stricken, struck.

Suffer, permit, endure.

Tale, count.

Tourney, a tilt between several
knights on a side.

Truncheon, the shaft of a spear or
lance.

Twain, two.

Twelfth-day, the twelfth day after
Christmas.

Villainous, terrible.

Ween, think.

Wist, knew.

Wit, know.

Worship, honour, power.

Worshipfully, honourably.

Wot, know.

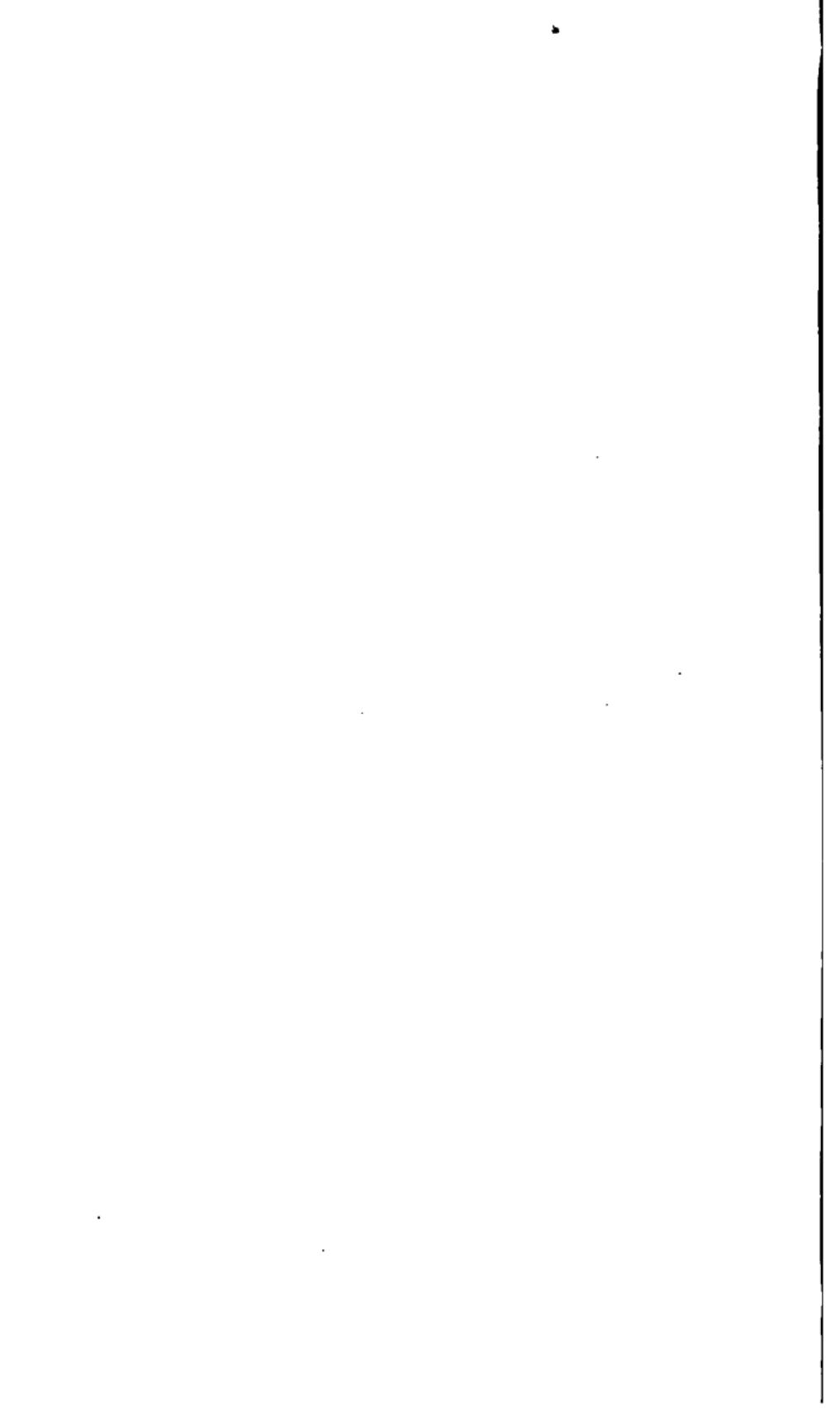
Wroth, angry.

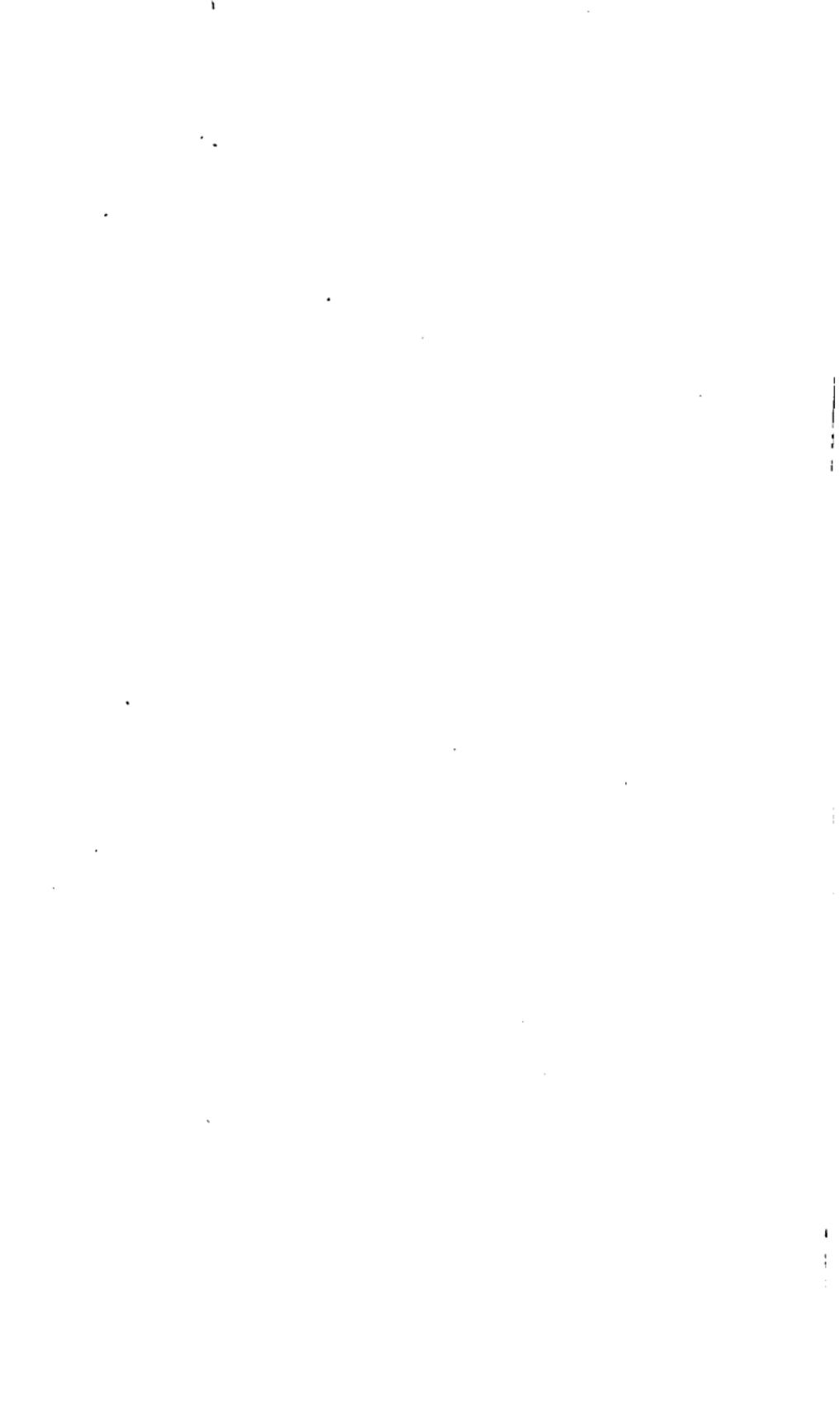
Yeoman, a freeholder or farmer

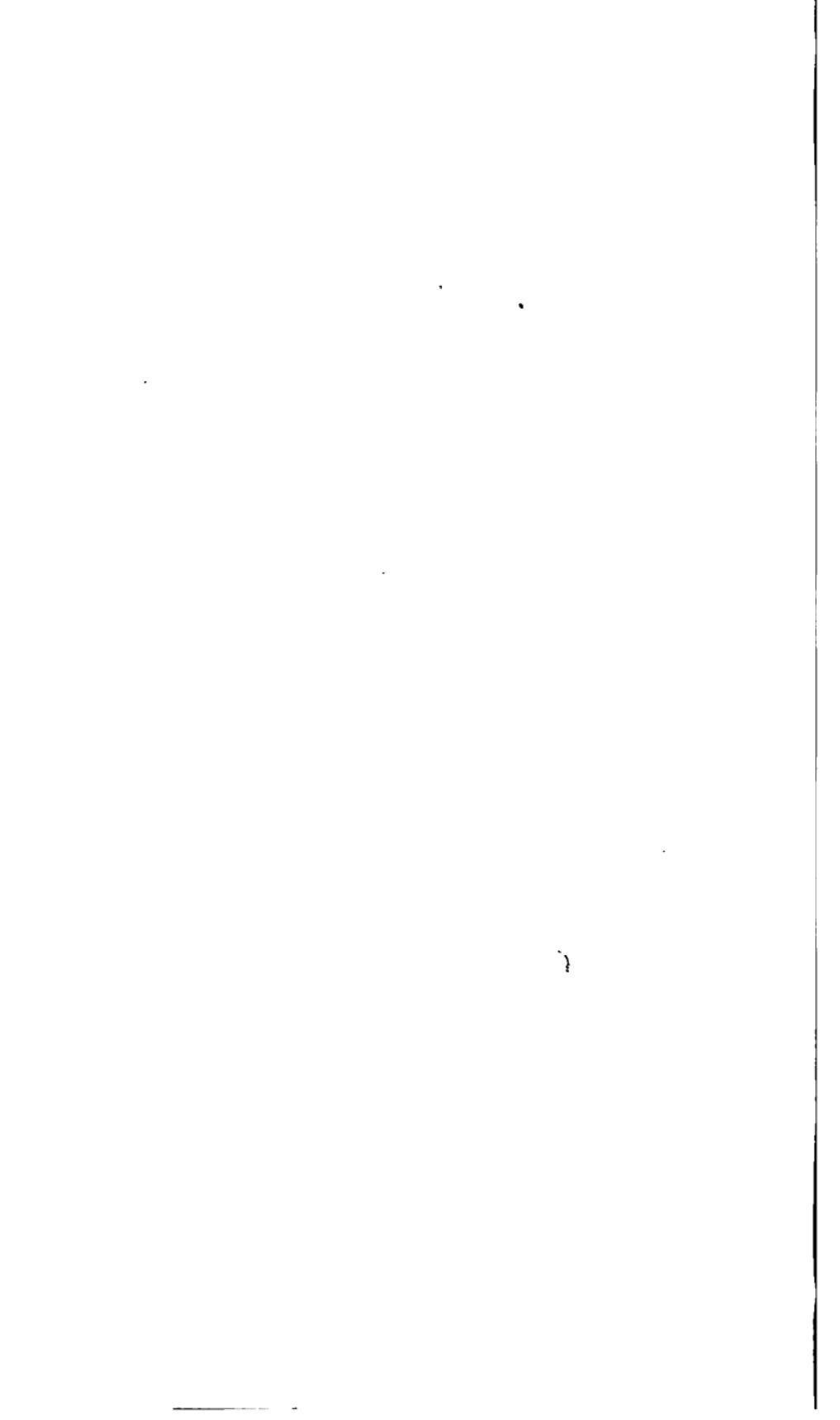
PRONOUNCING VOCABULARY OF NAMES

(The authors are indebted to Dr. W. W. Lawrence of Columbia University for assistance in making this list. In the case of each name for which no absolute authority has been found, what is thought to be the correct pronunciation has been given. The marks of pronunciation are those used in Webster's Dictionary.)

Accolon, ák'ó lōn.	Hernox, hēr'nōx.
Agravale, ág'rā vān.	Hervis de Revel, hēr'vīs dē rē vēl'.
Almesbury, ámz'bēr L.	Igraine, i grān'.
Anguish, án'gwish.	Lanceor, lān'cē ór.
Arimathea, ár'í mā thē'a.	Launcelot, lān'cē lōt.
Astolat, ás'tō lāt.	Lavaine, lá vān'.
Avillion, á vīl'yōn.	Leodegrance, lē ó'dē grānce.
Bagdemagus, bāg dē mā'gūs.	Lionel, lí'ō nēl.
Balan, bā'lān.	Listeneise, lēs'tē nāz.
Balin, bā'līn.	Logris, lo'grīs.
Baudwin, bō'dwīn.	Longius, lōn'jī ūs.
Bedivere, bēd'ī vēr.	Lucan, lū'kan.
Benwick, bēn'wīk.	Margawse, mār gōz'.
Bernard, bēr'nārd.	Melias, mēl'ī ás.
Blamore, blā'mōr.	Meliot, mēl'ī tōt.
Bors, bōrz.	Merlin, mēr'līn.
Brandiles, brān dī'lēz.	Mordred, mōr'drēd.
Brastias, brās'tī ás.	Nacien, nā'sē ēn.
Camellard, kā mēl'ī árd.	Nimue, nē'mū.
Camelot, kām'ē lōt.	Northgalis, north gā'līs.
Canterbury, kān'tēr bēr L.	Northumberland, nōr thūm'ber land
Carados, kār'ā dōs.	Ontzlake, óntz'lak.
Carbonek, kār'bō nēk.	Orkney, órk'nē.
Cardiff, kār'dif.	Palamides, pāl a mī'dēz.
Carlton, kār lē'ōn.	Pelles, pēl'lēz.
Carlisle, kār līl'.	Pellinore, pēl'ī nōr.
Carteloise, kār'tēl oiz.	Pendragon, pēn drā'gōn.
Colombe, cō lōm'.	Pentecost, pēn'tē kōst.
Damas, dā'mās.	Percivale, pēr'sē val.
Dodinas, dōd'ī nās.	Perin de Mountbeliard, pēr īn' dē mōnt bā'lē árd.
Ector, ēk'tōr.	Rience, rē ēnce'.
Elaine, ē lān'.	Sagramore, sag'rā mōr.
Estorause, ēs tō rowz'.	Salisbury, salz'bēr L.
Euphrates, ū frā'tēz.	Sandwich, sānd'wīch.
Evelake, ēv'a lāk.	Sangreal, sān'grē al.
Ewaine, ē wān'.	Saracen, sār'ā sēn.
Excalibur, ēks kāl'būr.	Sarras, sār'rās.
Gaheris, gā'hēr īs.	Terrabil, tēr rā'bīL
Galahad, gāl'ā hād.	Tintagil, tīn tā'jīL
Gareth, gār'ēth.	Tirre, tīr rā'.
Garlon, gār'lōn.	Turquine, tūr qwēn'.
Gawaine, gā'wān.	Ulfus, ūlf'ū ūs.
Glastonbury, glās'ōn bēr L.	Uriens, ūr'ī ēuz.
Griflet, grīf'lēt.	Uther, ū'thēr.
Guenever, gwēn'ē vēr.	Uwaine, ū wān'.
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